





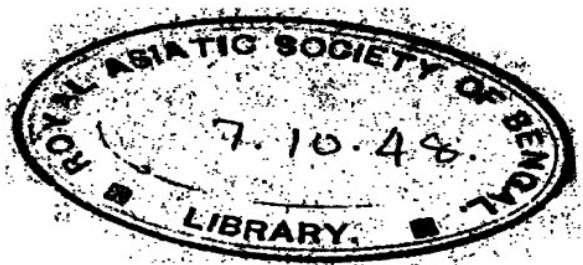


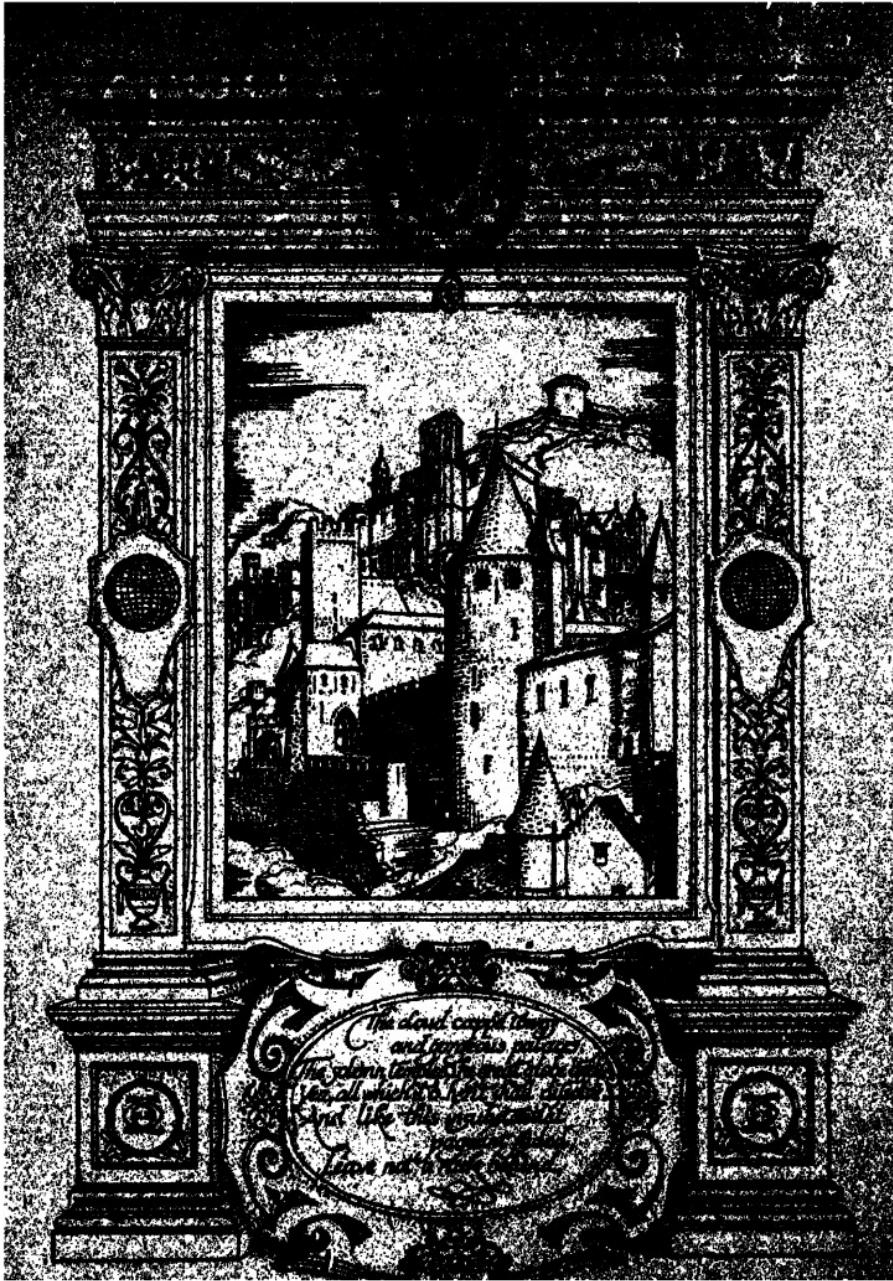




**CLOUD-CAPP'D TOWERS**







# CLOUD-CAPP'D TOWERS

BY

REGINALD, VISCOUNT ESHER



*ἀρτίδακρνε*

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To  
**L.T.-COL. JOHN MURRAY, D.S.O.**

To you, the heir of a fine tradition, and to a few other friends, this book is dedicated. Your misfortune must be shared by Mr. Geoffrey Dawson, editor of the *Times*, Mr. Leo Maxse of the *National Review*, Mr. C. P. Scott of the *Manchester Guardian*, and Mr. J. L. Garvin of the *Observer*. I owe them much, these leaders of a great profession, to which I flattered myself I belonged in days now very far away. Their precursors helped me in my youth to enjoy many pleasures, of which I should but for their aid have been deprived. They themselves have always been forbearing and generous. So, without their leave or yours, I am inscribing your name and theirs on this page.

ESHER.

*4th August 1927.*



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# CLOUD-CAPP'D TOWERS

## I

### LOWTHER CASTLE

THE lifetime of a man has now and again spanned a period during which social changes were so violent that youth, manhood, and age are hardly credible as part of a single experience. Among the lacunae of history is any record kept by one who, let us say, knelt in the presence of Elizabeth, and lived to see King Charles take his last walk across St. James' Park to Whitehall. Hardly a trace was left on that chilly day of Tudor England.

There are other periods of equally strong contrast in our island story. Who can recognize in the portraits of George IV, buttoned up in a frogged coat, strapped in overalls, crowned with a rough-beaver hat, the young Prince, in silk and satin, powdered and pigtailed, painted by Gainsborough a decade before the old regime disappeared from Europe.

Some of us have lived through changes in social life and manners as startling, if not so obvious, being rather in the direction of outlook than of millinery, of scientific invention applied to everyday comfort, than aesthetic change.

It is difficult to realize amid the constant hum of motor engines that some still alive can remember quiet summer evenings when the sad horns of German bands were wafted across Lord Lisfowel's meadows in South Kensington, when cattle and sheep were pastured under the shady elm trees, where Ennismore Gardens now stand in cold façades of bricks and mortar. Those were days when households offered up wishes for the success of Robert Lee over his Northern adversaries, when Tom Sayers was an heroic figure, when the Flying Dutchman, in full gallop, brilliantly coloured on a silk bandana, was pinned up on nursery walls, when Peter Pan was unborn, but Peter Simple was alive, when *Treasure Island* was uncharted, but the *Talisman* was found on a boy's bookshelf. War, Prize Fighters, Derby Winners, and Romance still form part of the mirage that children love: names are changed, the old names are forgotten. If country life in England during the past sixty years has undergone a complete transformation, if many of the large country houses have been closed or put to uses far removed from those for which they were piously erected, if the loss we have to pay for the gain of an industrial Empire in a competitive world is excessive, there are a few still scattered through the quieter country districts which have altered very little.

Revisited after the lapse of half a century, Lowther Castle on the north side looks precisely as it did when its present owner was a child.

The “Modern Gothic” taste of a century ago shocks the guest of to-day with its curious architectural attempt to combine mediaeval outline with nineteenth-century domestic requirements. Formerly on the south side a sparse lawn stretched across the front between two low wings or galleries, containing some Greek and much Roman sculpture collected by Lord Lonsdale, who in common with his contemporaries at Bowood, Chatsworth, and elsewhere had dashed abroad when the Napoleonic wars had ended, bringing home the spoils of Italy from the first exciting trip into a pacified Europe.

The lawn sloped away to a ha-ha or sunk fence, dividing a primitive parterre of simple flower-beds from the Park, where the deer fed of an evening within a stone’s throw of the windows. Here a change has been wrought with a boldness of conception and a disregard of obstacles akin to that of the great Louis when he swept away the modest home of his father and planned the gardens of Versailles.

William Earl of Lonsdale appeared to us children, at that time his guests, to be of an age so advanced as to make him already an historic figure worthy of a place among the personages familiar to us from our school-books, mystical beings long since passed away—Napoleon, who had been our host’s contemporary, and Marlborough, who may well have been for all we knew.

A personage he certainly was, and had been from his youth; companion of the Prince Regent

after the death of Fox, when the Prince finally deserted his old political friends: a Minister who had served under Lord Liverpool, a colleague of Wellington and Peel. Not only his powerful electoral influence, but a shrewd appreciation of parliamentary life, coupled with singular acumen in threading his way through political thickets, had led to the seeking of his advice by politicians far more eminent than himself; while his disinterestedness, due to temperament and great wealth, made him an acceptable referee in the social disputes of the salon and of the gaming table. Like his friend Lord Hertford, the fourth Marquess, he was an amateur of beauty in women, in horses, in art, and in music, so that Paris, then the centre of the world of celebrities and fashion, drew them both into its silken net. As a young man his shrewd, rather foxy, face was as well known at Almack's among the Dowagers, who never caught him, as in the *coulisses* of the Opera among the ballet dancers who did. His yellow jacket was followed by sportsmen on Newmarket Heath with the same certainty of a good run for their money as were his hounds and the yellow coats of his hunt servants through Westmoreland dales. But his Bouchers and Fragonards, his Louis XV *bibelots*, *tabatières*, and miniatures, the taste they exemplified, the activities they denoted, though they had not curtailed his days of life, had brought to his declining years the penance of gout which left him a partial wreck. Though his eye was still keen he was almost

immobile. Rarely did he make an appearance before dinner. Then, his guests already assembled—every male decorated with a “buttonhole,” every lady with a posy—his body servant would wheel the old Lord into the room, dressed in the mode of an earlier generation, wearing his Garter ribbon as was the fashion of those days. Up to the head of the table he was wheeled, where he sat with a golden background of racing cups that were grouped around what the young people believed to be the shield with which Achilles had dazzled the eyes of Hector. He sat there ladling out soup and carving venison for his guests, according to the simpler customs of those days—for the gout had spared his hands—while his brother the Colonel, bearing his years with far less equanimity, faced him and fulfilled a similar function at the farther end of the long mahogany table.

By day Lord Lonsdale was never seen otherwise than in overalls with straps, a cut-away coat, high collar and stock, and a rough beaver hat. His inseparable companion was an English terrier called by the absurd name of “Pup,” red in colour and smooth coated. He must have had a succession of these dogs, as he was never without one.

Notwithstanding the generous hospitality of the English country house sixty years ago, the refined luxury which has since become a necessity of entertaining was wanting. The fare was as massive as the plate. After sunset the corridors were dimly lighted by oil lamps, and all that

could be seen was the glimmer of armoured figures emerging from the gloom. Passing up the great stairs to bed was a terrifying affair; the beds were lofty, hard, and curtained, and so high from the ground that steps were provided in order to clamber into them. When thirty years later, as Secretary to the Office of Works, King Edward drew my attention to the fact that not a single bathroom existed up to then within the walls of Windsor Castle, I was not surprised when I remembered the Lowther of my youth. On the other hand, the stables were lavishly supplied with horses and ponies; no restriction was placed upon their use by us children; we could ride whenever and whatever we pleased, at our own risk; and gloriously we availed ourselves of the privilege.

The Colonel's eldest son, Henry, afterwards fourth Earl of Lonsdale, was the beau ideal of us all. Every year we awaited his arrival with eagerness. He was not young in years. His sons were of much the same age as their cousin James Lowther, now Lord Ullswater. But no one was in reality younger than this florid M.F.H., this fine horseman with "hands" of gossamer, who taught us to jump over a bar in the riding school without stirrups on a 7 lb. saddle; who on autumn afternoons would creep with us through fences, ford streams up to our ponies' girths, and skylark back with us through the Park as the sun began to set over the hills above Patterdale. Or, on Shap Fells, where in the

primitive muzzle-loading fashion of that ingenuous time his favourite companion—as I flattered myself I was—would carry for him his powder flask as an acolyte carries a censer. He would lure us to walk with him through the fruit gardens, the greediest of the whole band, and then on to the charming house at Hackthorpe, where an artist, Jacob Thomson, lived; a protégé of the old Lord, who liked his rather provincial art, ordered pictures from him, and watched him painting at Hawes Water or on the "Terrace" that overlooked the Lake country. The Vicar, Mr. Tylecote, then fresh from the University and famous as a cricketer, lived close by. He bowled us boys out with ridiculous ease on our rough cricket pitch in the Park—he himself still unbowled is still in the Vicarage (1926), and with undiminished keenness watches the games that he used to play.

In *Coningsby* Disraeli has left an attractive portrait of Lord Lonsdale under the name of Eskdale. It was a type that appealed to Disraeli: the type of man he chose in due course to fill a place in his Government or at his table. "Le savoir faire vaut mieux que le savoir" he would have replied if anyone had ventured to criticize his selection. He was drawn to Lord Lonsdale by the same thoroughly English virtues which attached him to Lord George Bentinck. He liked a man who could win £100,000 on a race or sell for a song the prospective winner of the Derby without turning a hair.

Lord Lonsdale recognized the compliment paid to him, and laughed away the insinuations of the Peelites. Disraeli's motives were nothing to him. He admired the brilliancy of the man's wit, and as for his race, he had met many Jews in the *coulisses* of the Théâtre Français and he liked them. When his Tory friends, gathered at Lowther on the eve of Lord Derby's retirement, declared that Ben Dizzy, as he was called in unfriendly circles, could never succeed to the leadership of the Party, the old Lord only remarked that the men who had tried to shout him down at the outset of his career were hoarse by this time, and that flowered waistcoats, if unsuitable to a fledgling member of the House of Commons, were permissible in a leader. Lord Malmesbury and my father—both to be members of Disraeli's first Government—were strongly influenced by the experienced observer's remark that there was no other leader in the offing who could hold his own against the devastating eloquence of Gladstone and the cunning of the Whig aristocracy. On one occasion Henry Lord Brougham, sitting at dinner next but one to his host (my mother was between them), rallied Lord Lonsdale on his lifelong connection with the Jews, from Cork Street to Whitehall, from the moneylender to the phrase maker, and the other guests sat silent while these old men quizzed each other, and canvassed the political chances of a Tory leader, of whom it was destined to be said a decade

later that he was the greatest man born of a Jewish mother since Titus.

Possibly the Tory atmosphere of Lowther dulled the children's historical sense, but Lord Brougham was unpopular with them. His gargoyle features were the subject of ridicule, his quavering reminiscences made no appeal. One of us, when discussing him, sardonically quoted Byron's remark that Cain was justified in killing Abel to avoid the boredom of living 200 years with him.

A more formidable figure than the ex-Chancellor was the old Duchess of Cleveland, Lord Lonsdale's sister, one of the last of the great ladies who drove about London on all occasions in a "Charrot," with two powdered footmen hanging on behind. To see her descend at her house in Piccadilly was as remarkable in its queer pomposity as a generation earlier it had been to see the Duke of Queensberry—"Old Q"—under his parasol, ogling the passing girls from his balcony a few doors away.

At Lowther the Duchess's own lackey, gorgeously attired, stood behind her chair at dinner. She was a persistent and wary critic of deportment. Our *tenue* was never to her liking. When she was in residence no one dared to whistle in the corridors or be seen with their hands in their pockets, and few had the courage to sit in her presence. But she had a sense of humour that was not unkindly, and her regard for order evaporated if one of us played a trick upon a

guest—some too frequent guest who had earned her displeasure. Once after a ride, during which one of these unfortunates had forced my pony into a deep part of a ford by pressing me with his heavier mount, I slashed across the face with my riding whip this perfectly harmless gentleman whose conception of a practical joke did not happen to chime with mine. The old Duchess presented me with a sovereign. I had already been induced, as many boys are now but few were then, to keep a rough journal. The record of the books we read or skimmed through shows how varied, how discursive our reading must have been. To some extent it was controlled by a clever physician, an inmate of Lowther Castle to whom we boys owed our first introduction to physiology and the archaeological basis of history.

The daily routine of young people was leisurely in those days. In the long summer mornings the library was a favourite resort. Out-of-door healthy games were not the mode, and the automobile was a generation away. Boys, as well as girls, filled up their idle hours with "accomplishments." They played duets with their sisters and sketched with their mothers. A well furnished library—and most great houses possessed one—was a lure. We rioted among classical translations, French memoirs, and eighteenth-century essayists. We made crude attempts to put into form our own experiences. It so happened that I possessed a scope of reminis-

cence unchallenged by my companions. As a child, in a poplin frock, I had been seated on the lap of a little wizened old man who once had played the violin before Marie Antoinette. Later, in my great-aunt's house in Paris, I had been presented to a stout, dark-skinned man with masses of grizzled hair, an enormous hat held curiously between his knees. It was Alexandre Dumas. And again later, I had been treated with sympathetic kindness by a dignified, charming gentleman, perfectly dressed in what seemed to me the fashion of a prehistoric age. It was Lord Lansdowne's grandfather, the Comte de Flahault, who, as Napoleon's aide-de-camp, had accompanied the Emperor home from Moscow, and ridden that tragic ride alongside of his master away from the field of Waterloo. In addition to these remarkable contacts I possessed two precious volumes inscribed with my name, a gift from William Harness, to whom at Harrow Byron had written one of his earliest poems. Not bad credentials for a youth engaged with his companions in recording past experiences, the events of a summer's holiday, interspersed with the sayings and doings of a few smart women, Tory politicians, one or two *savants*—guests in a country house. These memories, mingled with juvenile reflections upon books half read, with attempts at Pindaric verse written in the faded ink of over half a century ago, form part of life's *débris* which sentiment preserves and common sense destroys. The library was

very quiet; undisturbed we climbed the high step ladders surreptitiously to glean what we could of hidden mysteries from volumes of late Greek authors and Caroline poets which lurked on its upper shelves. In spite of the sulphurous pages that we read, the atmosphere of that charming room remained fragrant with the faint odour of rose leaves and of old bindings.

At this distance of time, looking backward, quietude seems to me to have been the dominant note of an old-fashioned English country house. Perhaps in all life's aspects, as in the nobler forms of art, restlessness is incompatible with fine taste. Talk was mostly in undertone, avoiding with purpose the slur of "cleverness"; for these people gathered together at Lowther would have echoed Lord Minto's amusing dictum "I hate clever people, they are so damned silly." Lord Malmesbury, one morning in the garden, praising Corisande Lady Tankerville, who had been a dear friend to my mother in youth, said Corisande de Grammont had always reminded him of Talleyrand's eulogy of his own mother: "Elle ne parlait que par nuances. Jamais elle n'a dit un bon mot; c'était quelque chose de trop exprimé."

But there were interludes. No one who was a child in those days, who crept along the dimly lighted passage after dinner munching sugared currants, would be likely to forget the acrid voices of Lord Ranelagh and old Miss Anne Lowther quarrelling over their whist.

The note-books to which I have alluded reveal

that there was much talk about Gote House, D'Orsay, and Sam Rogers; also, because my mother's French birth had thrown her with them, of Emile de Girardin, M. Duchatel, and Guizot.

One or two remarks of the old Lord's, reminiscent of his youth, are chronicled : " Castlereagh was a great gentleman, which Canning was not. . . . The King [George IV] had no heart, only fine manners"; and again, " The King only liked men who were useful to him, and so long as they were useful." Of a guest, a collector of old china, remarkable for the shabbiness of his clothes, he said, " Why not. The Duke of Montpensier used to go about dressed in a gabardine in order to pick up bargains."

It was fortunate for us young folk that in this Regency household, where good taste, good manners rather than learning were paramount, one corner, the end of a long corridor, was shut away in aloofness where we were always welcome. The laboratory of a René was not more incongruous in the fortress of the Louvre, than the rooms of Lord Lonsdale's youthful physician in the surroundings of Lowther Castle. In his austere apartment we were taught to realize that while probability is the guide of life, we should take nothing for truth without clear knowledge that it is such. That Bishop Butler was a Rabbi, and Descartes a prophet. When we laughed at this pale young man who spoke to us in this fashion—as we often did—he would say: " Ridicule is no test of truth, but it is the

righteous need of some kinds of error." When we aired our Tory dogmas, picked up from the table talk downstairs, he would say: "It is futile to expect a hungry and squalid population, to be anything but violent and gross." In spite of our mockery these talks seemed of tremendous import. We wrote down at his dictation such things as "there are no great men, only green men and red men; but even then the colour is only in our perception of it; there are no great events, for is the sowing or the reaping the greater event?" Maxims they seemed to us, high sounding, quite incomprehensible. Although this pale scientist sat silent and humble among Lord Lonsdale's guests at dinner, he could rise to heights in his laboratory upstairs, when he explained that each individual is a synthesis of millions of subordinate individualities, that geology is the biology of our planet, that we shall never know whether personal or impersonal forces rule the world.

Who was this young physician? What was his subsequent career? Would his name convey anything to anyone? But he threw pebbles into the pool. I must have known, for I realized it always, that he had the obstinacy of a very honest mind —a characteristic that leaves a mark upon impressionable youth.

Busts of Roman Emperors, sarcophagi, and examples of late Greek sculpture did not complete Lord Lonsdale's collection of mementoes of an adventurous youth. Among his guests there was a sprinkling of graceful young people whose

presence amused some and offended others. Like the Marquess of Hertford he was unmarried, but practised celibacy after his own fashion—the fashion of his prime which clung to him through life. If we children were conscious—as I think we were—that our gay companionship included a selection from “les sept péchés mortels” of our host, we were none the worse. Certain families were chartered, like the d’Estrées of old, nothing being said until Thackeray’s poisoned pen turned weakness into crime, with reactions violent and widespread in the social habits of to-day.

Lowther, like England herself, slumbered peacefully. Lord Derby was Prime Minister, but Rupert had long ago stabled his steed. Europe awaited calmly his annual musings from the somnambulist occupant of the Napoleonic throne. Occasionally the name Bismarck was mentioned at diplomatic functions. Austria still represented the tradition of the Holy Roman Empire, in spite of the inexplicable catastrophe of Sadowa. The temporalities of the Roman Pontiff were still unchallenged. Mazzini was a troublesome fellow, but Cavour was in control of the new Italy, so troublesome fellows need not be taken too seriously. But the clouds were gathering over Lowther and over mid-Europe. The old Lord passed away out of an unfamiliar world, and as the young people so often his guests scattered to their various vocations—to a life less sheltered—events occurred that were destined to falsify the

teaching of their parents, to transform the placid England to which they looked forward into a confusion confounded for them, and worse confounded for their children.

But Lowther Castle stands foursquare still, very little changed, except that the yew trees cast longer shadows.

II

## ETON 'IN THE 'SIXTIES' AND AFTER

**K**ING HENRY VI, a faint-hearted King, is still credited by some with having possessed miraculous powers. It may have been so. In any case the waters have worn the stones of the College he founded by the reaches of the Thames through five hundred years. This posthumous miracle may justify his canonization.

For five centuries, since Pope Eugenius IV sanctioned Henry's Foundation, the influences of the Pleiades have been exercised on its behalf, and Eton boys have lounged arm-in-arm over the site of old "Huntercombe's garden" and up the narrow lane proudly called "the King's highway leading to Wyndsore."

Outwardly Eton has changed very little throughout the years. From the Paston letters, from other historical manuscripts that come yearly to light we realize that Eton boys look to-day much as they did in the fifteenth century, and if their dress has varied in fashion, their demeanour is of so constant a type that the Founder could not fail to recognize one of his scholars. In the 'sixties' the successful athlete wore a higher collar than his fellows, a gaudier

waistcoat, and a flower in his buttonhole. For sixty years there has been no essential change. The School and House "colours" have not much altered. Some embryonic Prime Minister still lounges his lazy length under the diminished elms of the playing fields. Some future Viceroy or Foreign Secretary still holds "Pop" enthralled by phrases hereafter to be amplified upon a broader stage. Some slight, dark youth steers a boat upon the reaches who may in years to come steer a course upon a still more famous river in a Pro-consulate undreamed of when he wore a coat of Eton blue. Boys still love and hate with the generous vigour of Canning or Wellesley : expressing their emotion in verse, perhaps less Tennysonian in form than ours, but not less inspired by the beauty which is on the head of the Thames valley. Names that for generations have been cut into the oak panels of 'Upper School' are represented still in the School List of to-day. But if the type of Etonian is unchanging and unchanged, the encroaching life of a great city is imperilling the environment of the College. There is diminution in the atmosphere of quiet that on summer evenings brooded over the scene which in the 'sixties' was so peaceful. The rumble of London can now be heard over new roads that link up Windsor with the spreading city. The river sacred to Eton boys, the clean stream running past "Athens" and "Upper Hope" through crowds of diving lads, the waterway privileged to re-echo the

•splashing oars of Eton crews striving for friendly mastery, is now menaced by hordes of pleasure seekers from both ends of a London which numbers Windsor among its suburbs.

Eton has often been described—nearly always with affection and reverence. In prose and verse, in romance and essays, her votaries have thrust upon a smiling world the praises of their old school. Only once or twice, as in Disraeli's novel, in the lyrics of William Cory, and the verse of J. K. Stephen, has the theme been touched with a master hand. But writers good or bad agree upon one broad generalization—that Eton in fundamentals is unchanging. Many Etonians, thanks to the insight that old familiar places confer, can see no difference between the Eton of their day—in faith, morals, customs good and bad—and the Eton of to-day. It was the opinion of a Greek philosopher that if pedagogues live in an atmosphere of delusion, boyhood is an unchanging factor in the human story. Who has not been astonished at the faculty of forgetfulness in schoolmasters of their bygone frailties? Perhaps it is as well, for Arthur Benson once said that a wise "usher" should wilfully close the door on his own boyish experience.

I remember an occasion when a very different man took a different view. I was deputed by the unhappy parents of an Eton boy who had got into serious trouble to ask the advice of Archbishop Temple, at that time Bishop of London. He was a man of formidable presence

and rough of speech. My task was difficult for I was young. Having told my story lamely enough, that very wise prelate said, "Tell these poor people that I was once a boy and not always a schoolmaster; that I never could have remained Head Master of Rugby unless I had seen the vices of boyhood in their true perspective."

Dr. Warre's outlook was similar to that of Dr. Temple. His mind may not have been of the highest intellectual quality, but it was free from subtlety and eminently sane. We admired and respected him, antithesis as he was of us boys who were saturated with sentiment.

Looking back at those flowery but unfruitful years, who can be ashamed of having loved the school for the sake of its friendships, its enveloping sentiment, and its captivating discipline. I suppose this sentiment was perverse and unwholesome, for I recollect an Eton master saying, "If your mothers knew what you Eton boys are really like they would not only be pained they would be horrified." Yet we were very normal young scapegraces, outwardly cynical, enjoying every hour of boyhood, whether strenuous or idle. We gossiped at street corners, we swung down the High Street in line, we lay eating cherries under the elms in Upper Club, we jumped off Acropolis into the river, we rowed races that we hated as though we loved them, we played House Matches in the field with rancorous delight, and spent long lazy evenings in "My Dame's" library playing them

over and over again. Nearly all the companions of those days have lived their lives. Some have earned fame, some have passed away unnoticed and unknown.

Long before I knew that Littré had pleaded for the preservation of records of undistinguished lives, and had regretted the loss of letters and memories that generations of men had discarded as without interest and value, I had begun to keep letters and scraps. A very fair idea could be formed of Eton in the last half of the nineteenth century from these old letters. Many years ago in an essay on Lord Rosebery's *Pitt* I tried to make a picture of the character he bore as an Eton boy. His old tutor used to describe how he was wont to astonish his teachers by the gravity of his demeanour; when he arrived at Eton as a "new boy" he used to lie low while others talked, and wait for a chance of saying at his ease something unexpected and *sec*; how remarkably he possessed, even then, that capacity for the true adjustment of two dissimilar things which make a spark, and is called wit.

Lord Rosebery as a boy was difficult of access, even to his tutor. So much so that the unusual method had on one occasion to be adopted of tearing over his verses in order to secure his presence in "pupil room." It had the desired effect, and to his enquiry of why that indignity had been put upon him, he was told the story of how Absalom burnt Joab's corn when he found that an interview could not be obtained

by less drastic means. This episode earned Lord Rosebery a nickname.

If his contemporary, one who was destined as a successor to him in the line of Prime Ministers, left an impression less vivid upon the school, Lord Balfour's quality had been early gauged by those who knew him. William Cory parodied Goethe's well-known saying, "I trifled in my youth, I will trifle to the end," when he wrote of Arthur Balfour, "He philosophizes in his youth, he will philosophize to the end"; but with prophetic insight a few years later, when George Curzon's school reputation was at its highest, Cory selected Arthur Balfour as more likely to occupy the highest office under the Crown. Like many clever boys he was fond of syllogisms, but no clever boy was less enslaved by them. In those early days he could bring his whole mind into play on a subject, even though distasteful to him. It was, and has remained, the secret of his charm. It must not be supposed that in boyhood these lads, so distinguished in after years, filled a place in the eyes of their fellows comparable to that held by athletes who excelled on the river or in the playing fields—the McClintocks, the Bunburys, the Lubbocks, the Lytteltons. Eton produces Prime Ministers in her leisure moments, when she is not otherwise engaged. Except by bores no public school can be tested by the intellectual equipment of its scholars. A school like Eton must be judged by the enthusiasm she inspires. Many believe that

the "older public" schools have passed their zenith, that the special qualities they fostered have lost their value in a commercialized world. This may be so, for it has been observed that not many years ago an onlooker from the Gallery of the House of Commons would have found it difficult to discover on the Front Benches a man who had not been brought up at Winchester, Eton, or Harrow, whereas to-day it is difficult to find more than a sprinkle hailing from these famous schools. The Army, India, the Civil Service are no longer stamped by old Etonian exclusiveness. The lesser public schools, the grammar schools of England, are pushing aside the inheritors of a lovely but archaic tradition. And yet,

No spring, no summer beauty has such grace,  
As I have seen in one autumnal face.

There are many middle-aged men who, when they cross Windsor Bridge, and see lying ahead of them that slovenly street, with the pinnacles of the Chapel coming finally into view, when they meet lines of boys streaming towards the Brocas, remember with joy and sadness quaintly mingled "the quenchless hope, the honest choice, the self-reliant pride" of the old far-off days. Each individual Eton boy is a synthesis of hundreds of his predecessors at school, so that anyone caring to know what Eton boys are like to-day, or were like half a century ago, will find a true picture if they choose in a chapter called

"Eton in the 'Sixties,'" published in the biography of Sir Hubert Parry.

Hubert Parry, when at school and throughout life, was typically Etonian. If the aim of biography is to picture a man in his surroundings, with the background before which he stood, it is achieved in the volumes that recall to those who knew him, and explain to those who did not, the gleeful, impetuous, gentle, brave, boyish, manly, lovable Hubert Parry, who devoted his genius to the imaginative handling of music and friendship, but remained an Eton boy to the end of his life. He carried the Eton tradition into the circles in which he moved, and they seemed to be bound round his heart. When I first went to "Evans'" the mercurial figure of Hubert Parry dominated our little throng. Perhaps it was his chuckle, audible from one end of Keate's Lane to the other, or his dark tossing mane of hair, or his winged feet when he flew across "South Meadow" in the scarlet shirt of which we were proud, that captivated the imagination of boyhood, when physical perfection in games eclipses all other claims. Anyway, my first recollections of Eton centre in Hubert Parry. He whirled us into the musical society and pushed us into the football field. Almost in my first week at "My Dame's," with the valour of ignorance I charged into Hubert—playing "short Behind" in "My Dame's" game—and he, as was his wont, saw nothing but the ball in the mist of excitement that hung about every action

of his life then and afterwards, the result being that I found myself laid out on a heap of coats, and finally carried in his arms to be deposited on the sofa in "My Dame's" sitting-room. It was a lesson I never forgot, and I developed a miraculous skill in avoiding a similar contretemps, while at the same time creating an impression of reckless daring which, when others tried to copy, procured for them the hearty curses of their House captains.

We realized Hubert Parry's uncanny musical gifts—uncanny because neither before nor since, so far as I know, has any Eton boy qualified when at Eton for a musical University degree. We were proud of this and of him. Although gifted with the characteristics that pertain to leadership in school life, he never presumed on his leadership. He appeared to hover on the confines of our common life, laughingly aloof from our daily interests, plunging with fiery energy into games. As years rolled by he changed very little. Of all the Etonians I remember in boyhood, he and George Curzon changed the least. In appearance, in manner, in ways of speech, in movement, in outlook upon life, what they were as Eton boys so they remained to the end. Perhaps Lord Ronaldshay will be able to convince of their error, when his book appears, those who misunderstood and misjudged George Curzon. His task is difficult, for his subject is complex. George Curzon was a fine type of the unathletic Etonian, brilliant,

generous, broad-minded, lavish of his endowments, faithful in friendship. He was mature at eighteen, clear in his outlook, consistent in aim, and brave in misfortune. The physical pain that gripped him a few weeks before he was due at, Balliol as an undergraduate, that led him for a time to fear that his ambitions were laid in dust, clung to him through life. Few men after early youth—only men of heroic mould—can withstand the onslaught of physical suffering, are able to carry on with animal spirits and intellectual vigour unimpaired. George Curzon achieved this difficult feat. He got no credit except from those who knew what the effort cost him. It was a triumph of “youngness” over middle age. As a boy he was old for his years, as a man he retained the optimism of youth. Hubert Parry also possessed this Sophoclean attribute. Music and an elemental love of the sea kept Parry curiously young. As the years flew over him he appeared to get into closer touch with young people, so that his oldest and dearest friends marvelled at the schoolfellow sympathy and understanding established without an effort between him and his pupils at the Royal College of Music.

There have been some Etonians, like Charles Earl Grey, who were no believers in the influence of public schools, who actively disliked their own. Others could not have loved Eton more, and believed, within certain limits, less in her achievement. If boyish criticism is commonly

confined to the hierarchy of their teachers, in later years men undoubtedly begin to distinguish between the good acquired from universal devotion to games, and the loss sustained by the total neglect of the humanities. To Eton's credit account must be placed the fact of which there is such ample proof in her records, that during those hundred years, from 1757, when Chatham began that marvellous "run down" in the game of Empire, to 1858, when the Government of India passed from the "Company" to the Crown, Eton and the greater public schools sent hundreds of boys into our English world notoriously well equipped for the task of Empire building. If ten years later, when oligarchic England began to merge into democratic England, the old public schools, and Eton among them, began to lose their hold upon public life, it was because their method, their tradition, their outlook were unsuited to the new England fashioned by Peel and Gladstone, to an economic cult based on violent competition, to philosophy founded on a theory of survival of the fittest, to religion compromising with biology rather than resting on revelation. In the days of Dr. Keate an Etonian could be fairly certain when he left school to find throughout his career, whether in the corridors of Parliament or the Law Courts, whether in quiet country parsonages or the County Bench, friends who could snort like his old Head Master and could recall the "swishings" he had given them. This cohesion based on memory was

a source of strength, and even when the influence of Eton ceased to be paramount, it was still diffused through what for many years in England and the growing Empire was the “governing class.” But when commissions in the Army and promotion in the Army were no longer obtained by purchase, when the Law Courts were removed to Temple Bar, when the surging tide of Agnosticism diverted the stream of Etonians from parish churches into the Stock Exchange, and when Parliamentary constituencies began to place “carpet baggers” at the head of the poll, until the Front Benches which were the apanage of public schools became blocked with figures that no one could possibly mistake for “Blues,” it was obvious that a new era had dawned, and that the old public schools, if they were to be judged by their influence upon political life, were as archaic as the cony-ermine upon the robes of a House of Peers, sterilized, as some hold, by the “Parliament Act.”

Just before I went to Eton I remember Matthew Arnold saying to my father, “Dr. Hawtrey has done as much for Eton as my father [Dr. Arnold] did for Rugby,” and he proceeded to describe how by his careful choice of assistant masters, by the sympathy and encouragement which he gave them, and by his broad scholarship and patriotic fervour, Dr. Hawtrey had put new life into an institution that to many old Etonians, even in those days, appeared to be on the threshold of decay. During the turbulent years from 1830 to

1850 Europe and England had been transformed. New elements were introduced into political life; science had commenced her triumphant inroad into the domain of scholarship and letters. Novel demands were made every day upon the Universities and Public Schools. Unfortunately, not one of her sons has attempted to tell the story of how resourcefully Eton has contrived to stem the rising tide of hostile criticism, and has met from time to time the calls made upon her by the varying conditions of our social life.

It is an interesting theme, and if "Eton in the 'Sixties'" were made the point of departure, and a writer were to trace the progress of the school, its successful efforts as well as its failures to keep abreast of changes wrought by the reforms of 1867, the Education Act of 1870, the end of Queen Victoria's reign, the influence of all that the names of Darwin and Huxley stand for upon University life, up to the outbreak of the World War, much might be accomplished towards re-adapting our school traditions to the fierce competition of the political and social forces of the England of to-day. In the 'sixties' a boy grounded as I was in the elements of classics and mathematics at a private school, not unadept at French and German even though his knowledge was facile rather than profound, knew enough to pass the Eton tests, and was able to avoid close attention to the cursory teaching of those easygoing days. We toiled moderately at games, enough to obtain the distinctions that make Eton life the happiest

imaginable, and we played with books adroitly enough to keep us from incurring the displeasure of our teachers.

With "My Dame," Miss Jane Evans, whose sagacity Sargent has portrayed in the picture that adorns the School Hall, a remarkable type has disappeared from the controlling influences of Eton. Arthur Ainger, my tutor, was then a young man of ardent aspiration and sober demeanour. His understanding mind was garrisoned with respectable scholarship with a goodly company of literary enthusiasms that were never abandoned or supplemented throughout a long life devoted to Eton, so that he remained—as so many Eton masters do—an older boy among boys. To William Cory I have tried to pay a portion of the debt we owed him in a volume called *Ionicus* that anyone may refer to who desires to know something of the Socratic influence then exercised by a remarkable man, an under master in a public school, over a succession of boys who left Eton and passed into the mêlée of public life, stamped with a poetic interpretation of England's greatness, a critical attitude towards flashy knowledge, and respect for the feelings and opinions of humble folk. If unintentionally he tore up by the roots inherited prejudice, childish mysticism, worldliness and other-worldliness, he grafted upon many young minds shoots that contributed, when manhood supervened to a blossoming of the best kind of liberal education. But after all the figure that impressed us most as

the manliest type of what Eton within her limitations could produce, was that of Edmund Warre. His overwhelming presence, rapid swing, his magnanimous, trusting, and trustworthy personality bursting with desire to express his affection for Eton and for us all, but pathetically inarticulate, places him to my thinking, as an equal among the hierarchy of leaders who in the years of the Great War left the deepest impression upon the soldiers they commanded. The essence of his leadership, demeanour, and teaching as Head Master of Eton is best described in the words Cromwell inscribed on the fly-leaf of his Bible:

Qui cessat esse melior, cessat esse bonus.

It is a difficult matter for anyone who has known Eton for sixty years to appraise her merits and criticize her failings. There is no balancing reason and sentiment where one's old school is concerned. Reading through some of Alfred Lyttelton's letters, written to me when in his eighteenth year, manly, shrewd comments on contemporaries, either at school or during the holidays, whether at Hawarden, spent with his uncle Mr. Gladstone, or at Bolton Abbey with the Cavendish family, the feeling of amazement grows at what Eton influence and training can accomplish when the material is of high quality and the mind plastic, in fashioning the character of a boy—character in his case so well tempered that more adroitly sharpened intellects recoil from the contact. Everyone who from the Gallery of the

House of Commons has seen Mr. Bridgeman, the First Lord of the Admiralty, rise in his place and saturate the House with the becomingness of the Eton manner, realizes that in this old, possibly decaying nation, we still possess something that countless millions of dollars cannot wrest from us or reproduce elsewhere. No Etonian who listened to Mr. Balfour's speech on Irish Catholic Education, delivered in a House both sides of which agreed in disagreeing with every word he spoke, and who saw him standing in the face of so much opposition "fearless, resolved, and negligently great," then ultimately resuming his seat amid universal cheers, could feel surprise —so oddly reminiscent was the whole scene of some popular Eton captain who had lost the match at Lord's.

I walked not long ago from the School yard, passing under the archway flanked on either side by records of Eton boys who never lived beyond the span of youth. I wandered about the playing fields, back by the red brick wall of "Sixpenny" towards the long row of Fives Courts, where thanks to pious custom the names are carved of those whose athletic achievements earned them distinction.

It does not matter much that

the minute grey lichens, plate o'er plate,  
have softened down the crisp cut name and date,

for at the end of every summer half, Eton throws into the waters of the great lake of English life

her polished pebbles. The eddies spread, ring after ring. If the pebble sinks and the wavelets subside, some tiny ripple has reached the further shore.

It is not necessary, in order to fulfil the supposed requirements of patriotism, to desire supremacy—for our country, or for our old school. The city of the violet-crown, her philosophy, her artistic matrix, makes a stronger appeal to our modern sense of creative evolution, than the vulgar Latin aspiration to be mistress of the world.

In the 'sixties' England was unchanged from the England of Peel and Palmerston—the Indian Empire as we know it was not ten years old. Eton was the Eton of Hawtrey and not far removed from the Eton of Keate. The cult of mass and of mass production was not yet.

Nations were as yet unjudged by numerical standards, by dollars and dimension. America was struggling out of the morass of her civil war. Architecture had not been prostituted by Babelism, Literature by circulation, Art by self indulgence, Character by wealth.

Like the rest of the world Eton has suffered and is suffering from mobism. The size of the school may not have brought a corresponding increase in achievement.

But there is consolation in finding the world record for daring in the pursuit of speed held by an Etonian, showing qualities as dashing as

those of Lord Melgund over the course at Aintree in the old days.

I have seen of late years verses written by an Eton boy making a nearer approach to Masefield than the boy-poets of the 'sixties' attained in the pursuit of Tennyson. While to hear that Eton boys as of yore stick candles into precarious sockets within their wooden beds, careless of risk, in order to defeat the operator who extinguishes the electric light at a conventional hour, shows that the adventurous spirit of boyhood triumphs still over the not unreasonable prohibitions of hygiene and science. I think that the 'sixties' were a great period in the history of the Eton spirit. Our most famous teacher in those days used to say to us, "To be right in memorable moments is the thing we should most desire for ourselves." I fancy that same lesson is taught to Eton boys to-day. I have heard men and women, whose standards appear out of all relation to the constant unchanging factors of boyish weaknesses, note with disapproval the demeanour of some individual Etonian—drawing deductions irrelevant to the real issue that lies before those whose business it is to adjust the training of a great public school to the rapidly changing needs of our modern world. It is at such moments that we recall with a slight variation famous words, and take fresh heart.

If Eton was what Eton seems  
an' not the Eton of our dreams  
but only putty dress and paint  
'ow quick we'd chuck 'er—but she aint.

### III

## NEVILLE'S COURT

IT was during our first week at Trinity that Albert Grey paced with me the cloisters of Neville's Court planning the year that lay before him. Our small set of newcomers contained a few Etonians, but he had come to Cambridge from Harrow. His grandfather, Charles Earl Grey, disliked Eton, had formed a low opinion of public schools, and looked back with indifference upon his University career. Albert Grey's father had been educated at home. But Albert was sent to Harrow. His first impression of Cambridge was one of dismay. Here were values wholly different from those of a public school. Coming from a small world of school gossip, keenly contested games, heroisms based on athletic skill, a young undergraduate finds himself confronted with novel claims upon his attention. Even the well-worn belief that public school intimacies prove a binding link in University life is quickly dispelled. In the ferment created by the grouping within College walls of young minds newly awakened from the siesta of athletics, new friendships are formed. As the natural bashfulness of the freshman wears off he abandons himself to the pursuit of pleasures hitherto untasted.

There is a story of a Greek teacher in a Roman school who earned the disapproval of Cato by kindling in the minds of young scholars an ardent interest in knowledge to the neglect of their ordinary pastimes. Albert Grey and I realized at once how thoroughly Cato's view would be shared by our old teachers at Harrow and at Eton if they found us 'planning an immediate future where the art of conversing, music, politics, discussion, and sport were to take the place of the absorbing topic of games. We found ourselves in a society where nothing seemed to be taken for granted.. The collision of mind with mind had supplanted football and cricket. Reason expanded, and we were admitted into an enchanted place where all departments of knowledge could be explored.

Neville's Court, though it lacks the fountain and spacious sky. of the Great Court, is an entrancing setting for youth. Wren's Library, its peace and symmetry, the narrow lime avenue, lawns sloping to the river, the quiet cloisters, offering temptation to those who love to stroll and talk, are in such sharp contrast to the unquietism of the outer world. \*

If Shakespeare is right, if our moods and passions have their root in the domain of our unconscious rather than of our conscious life, the cloister of Neville's Court should have left a goodly impress upon the minds of many who in youth have trod for hours the flags beneath its arches. It would not be difficult to trace through

Albert Grey's varied activities, through the years he gave to his country's service, through his transparent utterances, his varying moods, his constant principles, his choking idealism, the influence of discussions beginning early of an evening, lasting deep into the night, as he rushed with exultant joy or anger from one set of rooms to another in that College Court.

Albert had lost his father a few months before he came up to Trinity. General Grey's position—he was private secretary to Queen Victoria—his parentage—he was the son of a Prime Minister—brought chances to Albert, of which he had early availed himself. Young as he was, he knew everyone worth knowing, and all about everyone who was not. His uncle Henry, the third Earl Grey, a politician of varied talents but of over-fastidious consistency, had held high office, and his influence counted in Albert. Grey's estimates of men and things. The Grey blood in his veins counted for more. Whatever merits or demerits Charles Earl Grey may have possessed, and opinions differed strongly on this point, he transmitted to many of his descendants, whether Greys, Lambtons, or Woods, characteristics which made them many friends and few enemies. A vivid sense of life, the essential quality of his nature, not as statesman but as man, appealed to Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire when he was young, and was noticed by Princess Lieven when he was middle aged. Albert inherited this vivid sense of life, sparkling, gay, and fervent.

It is impossible for a man, as alive as he was, to avoid the pitfalls of rash speech and undeliberate action. But to a Grey repentance comes quickly, and no one ever more frankly, more honestly, more gaily confessed an error, or apologized for a hasty word.. Fond of fun, unrestrained in its pursuit, a weaker character might have been submerged in the vortex of undergraduate social life. Weakness was not in Grey blood. Duty and pleasure could be harnessed and driven together by a light firm hand. If Charles Earl Grey had practised the accomplishment, finding it well within his powers, his grandson found no difficulty in following his example.

Most of us who went up to Cambridge from Eton or Harrow in those days were oddly equipped for University life, if it be supposed that a University, like the Cambridge of that period, is based on scholastic traditions and attached to the humanities. Such of us as were physically straight and strong had been trained to be more or less successful players of games, to be attractive if fraudulent oarsmen, but with only a desultory knowledge of the classics. Some of us were readers of lyrical verse and historical romances, a few possessed some fluency in the French language learnt at home, blessed or cursed with a certain facility of execution and invention on the piano acquired from our mothers. Albert Grey's horizon, as I have said, was wider than ours, thanks to the political air he had breathed from his childhood and to the traditions

he had inherited. But though he was no athlete, he could ride with vigour and determination, displaying courage and dash in the saddle. John Brocklehurst, the Lord Ranksborough of later years, had introduced the game of polo among members of the Athenaeum Club—an institution quite unconnected with Minerva. We played the game in elementary fashion, and our ponies were of a stamp far removed from the standard of Hurlingham, but Albert joined in the fray with exhilaration. His high spirits were infectious, and although he never exceeded fair limits himself, he was amused, after his rollicking fashion, by the antics of our young "bloods" at Athenaeum suppers, at "True Blue" dinners, recreations of tempestuous youth common to a certain type of undergraduate from the days when the younger Pitt was at Pembroke up to the present time.

"Cambridge during the long vacation," he wrote to me urging me to join him, "is the very best place in the world, and the pleasantest for the purposes for which one comes up. It embraces all the advantages that seclusion can offer, that occupation can give, and that Society can afford. There is nothing to tempt one out of one's rooms either morning or evening, and one's afternoons are always fully occupied. Last night, by the bye, we had a little dissipation sitting down to a rubber of whist as a kind of grace to the week's work, about 11.30 p.m. H. the senior wrangler was one of the party for whom I made a very

strong cup of some most excellent tea—tea of which I am looking forward to giving you a cup next term, a new lot and the best flavour in the world (and the cost of which is about a fiver a cup). The eminent mathematician after drinking with difficulty half the cup says about the end of the first rubber ‘I say, Grey, is this tea made out of cowslips,’ which remark disconcerted me so much that they got the odd trick against the best hand that Albert Grey ever held. This hideous nonsense was luckily for you cut short by the hour of dinner kindly interposing, which on Sundays” (the only day in the Long on which one writes letters) “is at the unwholesome hour of 5. Cyril Flower has been up here to look after his young brother. They call him in London, Flowery-Bowery. But he is such a nice fellow. Jebb has a great belief in his capacity and sets him up as one who should be the first novelist of the day.

“By the way did you hear a saying reported as emanating from the Master, ‘Jebb is a man who devotes the few spare moments he can snatch from the adornment of his person to the mismanagement of his duties.’ Bitter and very unjust if applied to Jebb, don’t you think so? In my belief the subject of the Master’s satire was ——! In that case true—what do you say? I wish you would come up here. Anyway I am looking forward to next term when we shall all be so snug in Neville’s Court.”

In term time our rooms were often thronged

of an evening, men drifting back after Hall, or back from the "Lion," or from a rehearsal at the A.D.C., where Albert was young enough and good looking enough to impersonate some heroine, remarkably like one of his delightful sisters.

Often we gambled for higher stakes than any of us could afford; but we talked, and enjoyed music, instrumental and vocal, that was of no mean order, when Walter Leaf or Edmund Gurney was its exponent.

Sometimes Albert and I would steal away to a ball, say at Grosvenor House, escaping without leave and returning by a train that left London at dawn. A ball at Grosvenor House during the reign of Constance Duchess of Westminster differed from any fashionable entertainment imaginable in these days, when all the greater London houses have been converted to other uses, or have passed away.

I am speaking of an epoch when men changed their evening coats before a ball if they had been in contact with tobacco smoke; when girls carried bouquets of lilies to a dance, and young men wore gardenias or a tuberose instead of "orders" which were then restricted to Knights of the Garter or to a rare red ribbon of the Bath. As you passed through the anteroom, from the walls of which Gainsborough's "Blue Boy" looked down, and entered the long ballroom decorated by Rubens, the fragrance of flowers was almost overpowering. If you were early you would be greeted by the

ample welcoming of Constance Duchess, and a gracious salutation from the grave seigneur who was her husband. The coming of the Prince and Princess of Wales was a royal progress, almost Tudor in its smiling impressiveness. Everybody who was anybody ranged up leaving a broad gangway for the amazingly good-looking young couple, the acknowledged heads of a social group that was called Society. The Prince of Wales was about thirty years old and the Princess in the very hey-day of youth and loveliness.

Among men, Oliver Montagu, the two Pagets, Arthur and Gerald, Augustus Lumley, and Harry Chaplin were the Princess's usual partners, although in the cotillion, with which such a ball culminated, everyone had a chance of a "turn" with her. The Prince was fonder of "sitting out" than of dancing, and the terrace overlooking the garden, the hundreds of coloured lights, the cooler air and fainter strains of Strauss's music pleased his fancy. Mrs. Langtry, whose fame has not yet perished, Mrs. Wheeler, who died young many years ago, Mrs. Cornwallis West, and Mrs. Mahlon Sands, perhaps the loveliest of them all, had been admitted into this exclusive circle by virtue, not of their dollars, but of their remarkable beauty.

The Moncrieffe sisters, headed by Georgiana Lady Dudley, the Hamiltons, the Grimstons, the Duncombes, and the Harbords were families of notorious charm, but, of them all, Sibell Lumley, afterwards Lady Grosvenor, with her

wistful beauty captured the susceptible hearts of all the younger lads among that gay and happy throng. Till the small hours of the morning—long after the dowagers had swept away their charges—Constance Duchess would urge the flagging band to yet another valse, she herself the most indefatigable of all, until it was time for us to rush away in the sunlight in order to catch the milk-train to Cambridge.

What fun it all was. It seems, on looking back, miraculous that we could enjoy ourselves so madly without cigarettes and cocktails. I suppose the world was younger and so were we. Whether at Grosvenor House, at Stafford House, or at Marlborough House, the scene was re-enacted with the same company, only the "decor" differed. One hectic week we caught that milk train twice with a day's interval. The second ball was at Marlborough House and Albert and I wore knee breeches for the first time.

Although in our young eyes these social gaieties seemed beautiful and not without dignity, they were looked upon askance by the older generation and were not viewed from Windsor and Osborne with favour. The contrast was too marked between the unhampered zest of the youthful Princess's dancing, and the stately measures of 1849, varied by Queen Victoria's tea-table at which Lord Melbourne dozed, while his young Mistress, with finger on lip, forbade her courtiers to wake him. The contrast to-day is even sharper between the pausing dancers while the Princess

of Wales swept round the vacated floor to the strains of the Blue Danube valse, and the smoky hurly-burly of the Embassy Club.

But in all ages youth will be served, and perhaps for the average girl social London is to-day a happier place than it was when as undergraduates we slipped away from Cambridge to a London ball.

Of Albert Grey it was said years later that “He lit many fires in cold rooms.” At Trinity he had already begun to rouse the interest of his contemporaries by an enthusiasm which warmed young hearts in the sceptical atmosphere of Cambridge. It was difficult to resist the charm of his faith in the men and women of the land wherein he was born.

“We are weighing anchor,” he wrote to me from the *Xanthe*, his brother-in-law’s—the Duke of St. Albans—yacht, “and how, ye Gods, can I discourse upon the relative charms of the single and married state, with the rat-a-tat grinding of the chain overhead. I have been all over the place lately watching the troops and feeling all the patriotism of a true-born Englishman as I witnessed the march past—the most glorious sight since Xerxes sat on the Rocky Brow—an immense natural shaped amphitheatre enclosing a space of two miles wherein the British Force lay massed. The whole of these visible at a glance, as well as the 100’s and 1000’s of spectators behind. I thanked Heaven more than ever I was in no way connected with any of those

dirty criticizing gentiles who had come to carp!"

One vacation he came with me to William Cory's Devonshire home, and while Albert delighted in the stream of patriotic anecdote, stories of valour by sea and land, with chapter and verse, poured from the overflowing mind of his host, "Ionicus" was secretly gloating over the presence under his roof of a son of one of those Whig houses up to which he looked with the reverence of a devotee of the Revolution families.

"I am as much averse to what you call Tory principles," Albert used to say and write to me, "as I am to that discontented lot who would abolish everything I respect. I suppose by Toryism you mean the Toryism of Wellington and Peel, who had they been successful in their opposition to measures, some of which were passed in spite of that opposition, and some of which they themselves were obliged to pass in contradiction to the professions of a lifetime, would undoubtedly by their bigoted desire to *conserve* have laid the seed and forced a hot-house growth of Radical Republicanism and Revolution."

In College we were already aware of the change that was coming over University life, owing to the demands of women for educational equality at that time advocated by Professor James Stuart, and a strong following in Neville's Court. The political revolution, in its latest

phase, dating from Mr. Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867, and the Education Act of 1870, was reflected in the attitude of the younger College Dons. The presence of women within our precincts, the modification of celibate habits, especially among the maturer Fellows, portended startling changes, as when men awoke after the interlude of the Révolution in France and found that wigs, powder, and brocade had given place to cropped heads and broad cloth. If we did not foresee the victory of the militant woman, with its consequential freedom of intercourse between the young of both sexes, producing social changes reminiscent of the new England that arose from the aftermath of civil war soon after the Foundation of St. John's and Christ's College by the Lady Margaret, we were already aware of the influence exercised by a woman—a frequent visitor to Neville's Court, whose gifts, whose advocacy of the claims of her sex to an equal share with men in the spoils of University life, exercised much influence over the younger members of our College.

Albert Grey's uproarious spirits did not permit of a too serious treatment of a subject that lent itself to youthful hilarity; but no one more than he was capable of handling the graver aspects of political and religious life that fermented within the precincts of the University.

"I have not read Gladstone's Vatican pamphlet," he wrote to me, "but what a convulsion he has stirred up in the camp of sacerdotalism.

It is the opinion of some people that the ritualistic clergy who scorn the idea of obedience to a civil authority in matters which affect their spiritual life, rather than flock under to the Public Worship Regulation Bill, will secede in a body from the English Church and join the old Catholics. Charlie Wood, near whom I was standing during Lord Shaftesbury's speech in the Lords, protested vehemently that if the Bill passed unamended they would all secede. Now, this Vatican pamphlet gives them the opportunity, for why should not the Ritualists, together with Camoys, Acton and Co., join the old Catholic Party as it exists in Germany? People say that they talk a good deal, but when it comes to sacrifice we shall see a different story. But history gives us examples innumerable of bodies of men preferring consistency in their religious faith when that faith is sincere. As to Gladstone himself, my impression was that he would join them, but I know nothing of him. I thought at first that he thought it a good moment to disabuse the public of his Roman tendencies at a time when a member of his Cabinet had 'turned,' but a man of Gladstone's earnestness, a man to whom the great fact of existence is the presence of Eternity, would never condescend to measures of that sort. But the pontifical squabble has no importance beside the increasing incredulity in the Divinity of Christ. That is the question that distracts the thoughts. I have been led into writing too much.

I go to Howick this evening after dinner. I came here [Carham Water] for two days' fishing on Lord Tankerville's water, but no fishing day to-day, so I went up to see a meet of the Duke of Buccleuch's hounds, was given a mount, and had a capital hour's run in knickerbockers and brown boots."

About Howick, during the lifetime of Albert's uncle, there hung the aroma of Whig tradition. Old Lord Grey seemed to us portentously old, but it was a delight to me to hear him reply to Albert's questionings about the men who had steered England through the shoals of the 'thirties and 'forties of the century then in its later phases. Althorp and Graham, Peel and Wilberforce, the old House of Commons, England before Dalhousie had laid the foundations of Empire, were favourite topics. Many were the stories of Lady Canning and Lady Waterford, names held in reverence, and subtle was the old statesman's judgment of the gladiators—mighty they seemed to us—who led the Government and Opposition during the closing years of Mr. Gladstone's first administration.

The sombre colouring of Howick in those days was lightened by the charm of Albert's three sisters. The dust lying thick about the home of an old childless couple rose in clouds from the flying feet of these gifted young people. The youngest was the joy of us all. With a more indomitable will than her brother, she resembled him greatly, and when years afterwards she was

found stimulating the gallant sportsman whom she fortunately married, forcing him, perhaps against his first instincts, into the arena of public life where, as Governor-General of Canada and Viceroy of India, he rendered fine service to his country, it was no surprise to those who remembered her girlhood to see Albert Grey's keenness and enthusiasm reflected in Lady Minto.

In our last undergraduate year we formed new and valuable friendships. Albert and I found ourselves with a footing in two very different camps. Without desertion of our companions we gradually began to see much of Henry Jackson, of Jebb, of James Stuart, all three Dons of our College, then in the height of their influence. We began to associate with men of another set and calibre from those with whom we had passed our days and nights. The three Balfours (Frank, Gerald, and Eustace), the two Myers brothers (Fred and Arthur), Walter Leaf, Edmund Gurney, Francis Jenkinson, of whose friendship I have written elsewhere, the two Butchers (S. H. and J. G.), Arthur Lyttelton and later Alfred, the Tennysons (Hallam and Lionel) —most of them Apostles—allowed us the privilege of sharing, but only as strayed revellers, their Platonic Symposium. I never understood why.

Then, when Albert and I had passed out of the undergraduate stage, he went "down" from Cambridge, and immediately embarked on that career of politics and public usefulness which led

him to high stations that he filled with benefit to his country and honour to himself. But Professor Stuart, who had helped to initiate the University movement for extending the blessings of Cambridge education to the poor districts of London and to other large centres of industry, lured me into joining a small group of graduates engaged in delivering historical and economic lectures under his general supervision. So for a few years longer I continued to occupy my quiet rooms in Neville's Court. These were fertile years.

With the pathetic enthusiasm of youth we believed that our crude lectures in a Bermondsey close would interest and elevate from their surroundings the minds of excellent mechanics whose practical knowledge of life's real values, gauged by hard work and simple animal pleasures, was beyond our experiences, limited as they were by the deductions of Whig historians and the musings of John Stuart Mill. We were brought up in an atmosphere still permeated by Tennyson, by Dr. Arnold, and by George Eliot. Carlyle and Ruskin were still read by undergraduates, while high politics lay on the knees of Gladstone and Disraeli, the embers of Prince Albert's German idealism being kept aglow by the widowed Queen, whose Jubilee was still many years ahead.

Moved by the faith of our friends and companions in our capacity to "better the world"—for that was the phrase in common use—we were nevertheless swayed by the scepticism of the

scientists, by their altruistic labours, by the doctrines of Haeckel, so often propounded to us in quiet hours by Frank Balfour, and by the propaganda of Huxley and W. T. Clifford.

Traversing so much sense and scientific thought was Fred Myers and the mystical extravagance of his verse. In the background, on one or two memorable summer evenings in the Roundabout of Trinity, Robert Browning recited to us listeners lyrics infused with a special orthodoxy of his own, while George Eliot—the guest in College of Edmund Gurney and Myers—exuded to an adoring crowd of boys an Agnosticism that not G. H. Lewis and Goethe could reconcile with the Calvinism of James Stuart. Still we were borne away on the wings of youth. We felt proud when our rooms in Neville's Court were commandeered by Gurney for the entertainment of his famous guest. • George Eliot sat at the head of an improvised table, contributed in sections from various rooms, with Fred Myers on her right hand, since to him was assigned by agreement the conduct of the solemn rites of this discipular banquet. Our reverential attitude was undisturbed, even by George Henry Lewis, who buzzed round the room for no apparent reason, recalling a graceless server swinging a thurible at some pontifical High Mass. George Eliot bore herself with Olympian calm.

For seven years, during the whole of that growing time, Neville's Court was the centre of our

College life, and my rooms shared with those of Henry Sidgwick, Frank Balfour, and Henry Jackson, the good fortune of attracting undergraduates for the sake of music and talk that was constantly to be enjoyed during the winter evenings. It was not surprising that we were glad to listen to Walter Leaf's playing, and to Henry Sidgwick's sophronistic talk to which his stammer gave point. We rejoiced in the boisterous politics of Jackson and the paradoxes of Edmund Gurney. Our minds expanded under the flow of F. W. Maitland, of whom Leslie Stephen once said to me, "Whatever Maitland tells you, you may be sure is as near to truth as we can hope to get."

Of the many friends whom memories of Trinity recall, George Lord Binning was the closest and dearest. During the whole of his undergraduate days he rarely failed to come to my rooms before he sought his own, however late the hour. Nervous and highly strung, he required the soothing hand of an intimate friendship. He seemed so fragile that neither he nor I believed his life could be spared. And yet his powers of endurance were remarkable. Whether lying out in the winter night at Tyningham waiting for wild duck, or riding miles home with me through rain and mist after a long day's hunting with the Cambridgeshire or the Fitzwilliam, his spirit rose superior to the feble agitations that wore him out during the quiet intervals between bouts of physical exertion. It is difficult to give to those who did not know him a taste of his quality.

Balzac might have done it. His letters, very precious and remarkable for incisive phrase and vigour, are bound up in two solid volumes. Yet he was no letter writer, but a friend in the confessional, and a composer of verses after the style of Lindsay Gordon, not less melodious than the airs he invented for them, which he played with a touch that more accomplished musicians envied. When he died in 1917 I was in France, but one evening in a small canvas shelter behind the Lines I wrote for a London paper something that I hoped his children would read. I have never known whether they saw it. .

Cambridge, I thought so then, and I think so now, was not scholastic. For me it was a mediæval University where monastic life was lived under lax rules. The clock of Trinity striking the hours, the Chapel bell, the tinkling of the Great Court fountain, 'accompanied, like the strains of an orchestra, our peripatetic meditations. Whenever I turn to my volumes of Burke, read and read again in Neville's Court, to those passages of noble prose, in which he expounded the philosophy of patriotism based upon tacit contract between every citizen, every family, every community of English blood, I seem to hear the murmur of our Trinity fountain and the chiming of St. Mary's bells.

One lovely night in the "Long" two of us lingered in the starlight on the steps of Hall, facing towards Wren's library, and S. H. Butcher read with us under the flickering lamp

those well-known passages from the Anthology where the Gadarean poet explains how he contrived to unite the sweet tears and the Muses with the joyous Graces.

Another night, when the snow lay deep on the College parapets, and Trinity was shrouded in silence, not a glow brightening any window of Neville's Court, George Binning lay across my sofa, the light from a green-shaded *bouillotte* striking his dark glossy head, and recited to me, in that sad humorous chant of his, nearly the whole of Omar Khayyam. It was a feat of memory little suspected by the Dons, who knew him only as a "sporting" undergraduate, unpunctual, neglectful, a flagrant breaker of almost every College rule.

I have mentioned Wren's library. In less than a minute from my rooms we could be in that stately chamber, flanked by its cedar-coloured bookcases converging upon Thorwaldsen's statue of Byron, which Westminster Abbey rejected, that, judged by later standards of taste, has been called insipid, but which sentimentalists, lovers of Byron, of whose company I am, rejoice to find within the walls of the College that his genius adorns.

Trinity library fulfilled our needs. I personally seldom used the University library, but its Librarian, revered and beloved by all who were admitted into his rooms at King's College, filled a large space in the lives of many of us. On Sunday afternoons, before Chapel, Henry Brad-

shaw gathered round him a curiously assorted coterie of Cambridge youth. While his learning attracted every one, his standards excluded all but a few. He was never known to refuse an introduction, but not many survived the test. Voice, manners, appearance, no serious defect in any of the three was overlooked. He treated youth with the *maxima reverentia* with which he handled a folio. No flaw in either escaped his trained and vigilant eye. He was of ruddy complexion and stocky in build. His virility was impressive and yet his manner was curiously caressing. He always reminded me of some tawny, heavily built cat, for he purred delightfully when a subject or a listener pleased him. But his claws were near the surface and a scratch was not readily forgotten.

Among the younger men who now began to take the place of older friends Alfred Lyttelton possessed the most engaging attributes. His many gifts and accomplishments were known long before his advent. He was welcomed beyond the usual greeting accorded to popular Etonians, and slipped easily into the social groups of Dons and undergraduates, perfectly at his ease, always at his best, in any company. He was a persistent patroller of our cloister. "I have thought a good deal," he wrote to me, "of that subject we talked of walking round and round Neville's Court, and have made up my mind to tell you that I dissent from what you said then," and he goes on to elaborate the reasons for his differing.

Admirable letters for so young a man, written from Hawarden where Ruskin, who promised to take him to see his "honoured master," as he called Carlyle, and Lord Acton were fellow guests, or from Bolton Abbey, "the prettiest of the old Duke's places," where the "sullen Marquis," whom he had not met before, impressed him by the "handsome" way he spoke of Mr. Gladstone, showing the "justness and fairness of the man"—and then he adds with an Etonian touch, "Two years of Drury's when he was 14 or 15 would have made a different character of that sullen Marquis."

We neither of us guessed that within a short time I should be serving Lord Hartington in a capacity that gave me a deeper insight into a character pathetically proud, so conscious of his own deficiencies—superficial and negligible as they were when weighed against the self-abnegation he imposed upon himself from a sense of duty to the race from which he sprang.

For not long afterwards Lord Hartington, then leader of the Opposition in the House of Commons, asked me to serve him as private secretary, an offer it was impossible to refuse, in spite of the wrench of leaving Trinity.

"That's grand," was Albert Grey's comment, "I am delighted it is settled. I am glad the appointment comes when it does, for being in opposition the work will not be so great, and you will I hope be able to go on with your own studies. You will learn I fear a great deal

that will disgust you in the way that national questions are regarded from Party rather than from *English* interests, but you, I know, will use your influence in the other direction, and make Patriotism the *acting*, as it is the right principle of Politics. As my father was Private Secretary for a large part of his life, I know pretty well what it means—and so you will allow me to say this—you will have proportionally more work and less thanks than any other official in the Kingdom. The advantage of the position is this; that so long as you retain the confidence of your Chief, you will be the possessor of a whole host of interesting secrets, and beyond this you will obtain an influence—the amount of which of course varies with circumstances, and which will be unsuspected from without, but still an influence in promoting National concerns. It is the *consciousness* of this *unacknowledged influence* in much that is of the highest importance that makes the chief and dearest reward of a Private Secretary."

A few days later I left Neville's Court. The last evening was spent with Gerald Balfour and Francis Jenkinson. There was no sadness in the parting, regrets were already buried. I knew that the links of the chain binding me to Cambridge were well tempered, and they have never snapped.

Among the many rewards life has bestowed upon me—so undeserving—that which touched me most came from my old University.

## IV

### HUGHENDEN

If we accept Sidonia's view that adventures are to the adventurous, Mr. Buckle, in his biography of Lord Beaconsfield, has passed the Sidonian test; for it was a notable adventure to take up the story of Disraeli's life midway, to complete the canvas half filled by another hand. Mr. Buckle's achievement was the more meritorious inasmuch as the ground plan of the Biography was not his own, that the material was vast and unravelled, and that some measure of censorship had been imposed by persons whose claims could not be denied. Under such conditions Plutarch would have failed to compose a perfect biography, or Lockhart a great book.

Before Lord Morley began to write Mr. Gladstone's Life he one day during a walk discussed with me what form the perfect biography should take; and he agreed with a suggestion of mine that, in defiance of convention, a book in three volumes, the first of which should be an appreciation, on the lines of Lord Morley's own *Cromwell*, and the other two a selection of Papers and Correspondence, would satisfy a fastidious taste, but he thought a publisher for such a work might not be easy to find. Mr. Buckle was faced with no such problem. For him the task was

plainly set, and he reconstructed for those who never knew Lord Beaconsfield that strange figure of a Jew of Aragon, which Disraeli loved to think he was, clothed in the robes of the most ancient order of Christian chivalry. In the two final volumes there is revealed, by judicious selection from his own inimitable letters, a wonderful picture of a weary but indomitable fighter, struggling against physical infirmities, who "wrought in brave old age what youth had planned."

Lord Beaconsfield left his papers to Lord Rowton—the Monty Corry, his much loved and devoted private secretary—a charming personality, of serious purpose, faithful in all things, whose eminently practical habits and training unfitted him for literary effort. He was never able to bring himself to grapple with the formidable bequest. He got so far as to obtain from Queen Victoria the loan of Disraeli's letters to his sovereign. These were copied, and after Lord Rowton's death the originals were returned to King Edward and handed by him to the Keeper of the Royal Archives at Windsor, a post I then occupied. But many boxes of unsorted miscellaneous correspondence remained at New Court, in charge of Lord Rothschild, who asked me to sort and arrange them—a labour I was obliged to refuse.

The choice of a biographer was difficult. There were two men qualified above all others by eminence in literature and politics. Lord Morley,

had he been free from the trammels of public life, would have revelled in the congenial task. Although a political opponent, the *littérateur* and artist yearned to take advantage of so piquant an opportunity. Reluctantly, as he told me at the time, he put the temptation aside. And Lord Rosebery, whom Disraeli liked and admired, and more than once tried to capture, could not be induced to make the sacrifice demanded of him. Another who was approached was too diffident or idle. When Mr. Monypenny was finally selected he visited Windsor Castle in order to discuss with me, who had charge of the Queen's official papers, the plan of the Biography. I was charmed by his simplicity but amazed at his disqualifications. He was aware how handicapped he was by his youth, his sojourn in South Africa, aloof from English public affairs, and his want of acquaintance with the political and social world in which Disraeli had always moved. But it soon became evident that his disqualifications were surmountable, that no mistake had been made, and that the young journalist's judgment and insight were on a level with his literary capacity. His untimely death threw the biographical enterprise once more into confusion. The choice of Mr. Buckle was happy. Although he was too young a man to have known Disraeli, he could remember Lord Beaconsfield. When almost a youth he had, to the amazement of the journalistic world, been chosen to sit in the chair of Delane. For a good many years, with ability

and with a high and disinterested sense of duty, he had edited the greatest newspaper in the world. His functions threw him into the inner ring of political life. His knowledge and judgment qualified him for the work he undertook, and so successfully carried through to its conclusion.

It is one of the most curious of life's little ironies that one who had been editor of *The Times* should have been selected as the biographer of Lord Beaconsfield. For Disraeli was never a favourite with the "Thunderer"; there were moments in his life when *The Times* harassed him with venomous hostility. Rarely could he do right in the eyes of Delane. The two men were cast in different moulds. Delane was as typical an Englishman as Palmerston. Physically, morally, intellectually Delane and Disraeli were at the opposite poles. Even when, in later years, Lord Beaconsfield was seen to stand for theories of government and for British aspirations that were congenial to Delane, *The Times* never gave a wholehearted support to the man whom all through life Delane had mistrusted. "Who," wrote Lord Beaconsfield, "shall rule the country, the Queen's Minister, or Printing House Square?" "Never mind *The Times*," he said on another occasion to Lady Chesterfield, "I will beat even your *Times*, which I know you are always afraid of; *The Times* may scold, it may rave and rant—but it will not daunt me."

Delane was well aware of this attitude of defiance, to which he was not accustomed. The

"tricky politician" who had been described in the *Quarterly Review* by Lord Salisbury, who was to become first his colleague in the Cabinet and successor as Prime Minister, as a mere political gamester, characterized by baseness and perpetual political mendicancy, had no attraction for the ebullient editor of *The Times*. Even if the Tory leader occasionally made good points for England, he was not to be forgiven his origin and early peccadilloes.

Differences of political opinion are susceptible of adjustment, but differences of political temperament are fundamental. Gladstone's personal dislike of Disraeli was temperamental. Gladstone, said a careful observer in 1870, looked a true-born Englishman, with noble clear-cut profile, a piercing eye, and an unconstrained manner. Disraeli, with curly black hair, dark skin, prominent under-lip, and veiled glance, looked like a fire-spirit confronted with the spirit of the ocean. "It was evident when he began to speak," he adds, "which was the more interesting man of the two." Disraeli's Aragonese mannerisms, his clear monotonous voice, and cold demeanour repelled, with a physical repulsion, his impassioned adversary. Bishop Wilberforce, trying at one moment to be all things to both men, piqued it is true at the loss of the See of Canterbury, while he saw "Gladstone as ever great, earnest, and honest," could only see in Disraeli "a master of selfish cunning and unprincipled trickery, a mystery man." Yet, now

that "Dizzy" stands self revealed, this judgment seems inept, and this comparison between the two statesmen crude and misleading.

When at last the English people yielded him their confidence they gave him a majority in Parliament. Confidence, indeed, had been of slow growth. For a quarter of a century the Party of which he was the real though not the titular head had been in Opposition. His racial qualities of endurance and patient tenacity—that supreme knowledge of how to wait—had stood him in good stead. And his Party reaped the benefit of his Maccabean courage. The personal antipathies of his followers gradually vanished, and suddenly the Party that has been called the stupid Party appeared to understand their Sphinx. Yet his political opinions had been expounded and tested for twenty years, ever since the fall of Sir Robert Peel. Although he once said to Dicky Doyle when I was present, "Owing to circumstances I have had to talk a great deal but Nature made me a listener," his inclination had from his youth up forced him into the arena of literature; and in political tracts and in autobiographical confessions, cast in the original form of the political novel, Disraeli had over and over again revealed the workings of his political mind. The policy he lived to carry out, and to inaugurate for his successors, had been clearly exposed in the trilogy of novels, *Coningsby*, *Sybil*, and *Tancred*. In the history of our nation no political mind shows greater consistency.

He was flexible and accommodating, as a Party leader should be, but from his political ideals he rarely swerved. With the sequel before us, and the Primrose League still in being, it is a curious reflection on Party foresight to remember that in 1867, when Lord Derby's retirement was imminent, the veteran Prime Minister wrote to Lord Malmesbury, "As to Disraeli's personal unpopularity, I see it and regret it"; so problematic was it then whether the Conservative Party would continue to follow the titular leader in the House of Commons. I have mentioned on a previous page that at Lowther Castle in August 1867 Lord Lonsdale—the Lord Eskdale of *Coningsby*—never ceased to press upon his Tory guests the importance of accepting as their Master the only man among them who could carry the horn and rally the hounds. However, in the early days of the following year the Queen, when Lord Derby retired, solved the problem of leadership by sending for Mr. Disraeli. She herself had a load of prejudice to put aside. The Prince Consort had disliked Disraeli. The Prince had looked upon Peel as a noble gentleman, an honest statesman, who had been betrayed and beaten to his knees by this satanic Jew. The Queen never reversed her husband's judgments. She had, two years before, accepted Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer not without some demur, mainly because the holder of that office was not brought into contact with the sovereign. Among Disraeli's personal

triumphs his conquest of the Queen was the longest deferred. He has been accused of flattery and of subservience to her lightest wish—pliancy Mr. Lowe called it—but the secret of his success did not lie in subservience to the monarch so much as in masculine appreciation of her sex. Many years ago, in a sketch of Lord Beaconsfield in one of the chapters of a book published under the title *The Yoke of Empire*, I mentioned a saying, which has often been quoted since, how, walking in the garden at Longleat, with my father, and myself, he explained his method: “I never contradict, I never deny; but I sometimes forget.” But though his memory at moments conveniently failed him, he remembered in his dealings with the Tory Party the maxim of his own *Vivian Grey*, “Make them fear you, and they will kiss your feet.”

Thus in 1868 he became the accepted leader of the Conservative Party, as he had been for long its animating force. To the Liberal Party throughout the country, so deep was their mistrust, his elevation came as a shock. Mr. Gladstone was confronted with the moral paradox of his rival’s attainment of the prize. His teeth were set on edge, as Gathorne Hardy observed. In this race for power the metallic had beaten the fluid mind. In a few months they were destined to change places. On becoming Prime Minister Disraeli was faced with the accursed problem of Irish misgovernment. For a generation that unhappy country was to be the battle-ground of

politicians in a fix. Disraeli throughout his long life never set foot on Irish soil; Mr. Gladstone, whose Irish policy was destined to disrupt parties and divide kingdoms, was once a whole fortnight in Ireland. This curious example of indifference to first-hand knowledge was followed by their successors in the post of Prime Minister, with the notable exception of Mr. Balfour.

When Mr. Gladstone began, in a series of parliamentary resolutions, to lay his axe to the Upas tree, he commenced by denouncing the Established Church of Ireland. Disraeli immediately joined issue. His intention, so he said, was to govern Ireland in accordance with the policy of Charles I and not that of Cromwell. He warned the House of Commons that, after a period of great disquietude, doubt, and passion, "events may occur which may complete that severance of the Union [between England and Ireland] which to-night we are commencing." He justified, from the Roman Catholic standpoint, the attempt that he foresaw would be made by the Papal power to obtain ascendancy. Would the Protestants of Ireland submit? he asked. "Is England to interfere? Are we again to conquer Ireland? Is there to be another Battle of the Boyne?" In prophetic words he foretold March 1914. Although Disraeli pretended to see nothing more in Irish discontent than the effects of a damp climate and a lack of amusement, the English constituencies took an opposite view; a General Election in the autumn of 1868 gave

Mr. Gladstone his chance and his revenge. An unusual amount of patronage had meanwhile fallen to Disraeli during his short tenure of power. He had filled up the Archiepiscopal See of Canterbury, the Sees of Peterborough and London, and the Deanery of St. Paul's. It must, however, be said that it was due to the knowledge and insight of the Queen rather than to Disraeli that the appointments of Tait and Magee were made.

Disraeli's crude attempts during the year 1868—never repeated—to use Church patronage for political purposes were foiled by the Queen, acting, as she often did, upon the sane advice of Wellesley, the Dean of Windsor. Disraeli, however, was permitted to make a poetic choice in his selections of a Viceroy for India and a Governor-General for Canada. On relinquishing office he had the gratification of obtaining the Queen's assent to bestow the title of Viscountess Beaconsfield upon Mrs. Disraeli. Prejudice was yielding to personal charm, to the close contact with genius.

The electoral defeat of Disraeli in 1868 reopened the schism in the Conservative Party. Hatreds revived and mistrust blossomed afresh. During the years that immediately followed he took no pains to conciliate his Party. He had, during the months of his Premiership, established a hold on the regard of the sovereign. She had condescended to send him flowers from Osborne. The cult of the primrose had been unconsciously inaugurated. He retained the confidence of his

old chief, Lord Derby, to the end of that statesman's life. He had attached to himself the tepid affection of Lord Derby's son, for he never neglected the House of Stanley. But his ecclesiastical policy, which he explained as tending to induce the two parties in the Church to cease their internecine strife and to combine against their common enemies, the Rits and the Rats, had failed, and he had alienated the powerful mind of Lord Cranborne, afterwards Marquess of Salisbury. Nor had he, at this time, captured the confidence of Cairns, the most virile intellect in the Conservative ranks.

Disraeli in Opposition was accused of indifference, untimely reserve, a lack of political offensive, and lukewarm leadership. The explanation was partly that he deliberately adopted Fabian tactics as the most suitable in the first days of political disaster ; but he confessed to a certain sulkiness of temperament in a moment of defeat, which led him to revert to the literary passion of twenty years before. He became absorbed in the composition of *Lothair*. The novel was written in profound secrecy ; even the faithful Monty was not told. The sensation was phenomenal, sensation not limited to Europe. In spite of some contemptuous criticism—the novel was denounced in the *Quarterly Review* as an outrage against good taste, as dull as ditch water, and as flat as a flounder—its sale was enormous, and the effect upon Disraeli's ever-disordered finance highly satisfactory.

The *Quarterly* article, every one knew, was written by Hayward, a bilious essayist, whose venom had increased with age. Lord Houghton followed up the attack with acid reprobation. The hounds of war were in full cry!

The Conservative Party was bewildered. All the submerged prejudice against Disraeli floated again to the surface. It was remembered that the Sidonias had secretly adhered to the faith of their fathers. One of these even had been an Archbishop of Toledo, but had retained his faith in the unity of the God of Sinai and the rites and observances of the Law of Moses. Although Mr. Canning had dabbled in verse, no Prime Minister had been guilty of writing so trivial a thing as a work of fiction which the critics, including a Bishop, had denounced as vulgar. Why could he not, if he wished to scribble, make contributions to the discussion about "Vaticanism" like his great rival? The Sphinx continued to smile, and the baffled hounds limped away.

In many ways the face of the world was changing. Our ancient foes, the French Colonels, had been crushed out of the European polity. A great military Empire had risen in Central Europe. There was a King in Rome other than the Pope, although that Pontiff was once more claiming infallible jurisdiction over British subjects; and Cardinal Manning, his agent in England, was gaining by personal influence a hold over the common people.

There can be no doubt that *Lothair*

damaged the hold of Disraeli over the Conservative Party. The chasm widened between him and his colleagues. In the lobbies of the House of Commons and the drawing-rooms of Mayfair the future leadership of Lord Stanley, who had now succeeded his father as Lord Derby, was openly advocated. Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone's Government held undisturbed possession of Parliament. Measures of first importance were passed into law. The nation was choked with legislation. The Opposition were powerless and, according to the views of Disraeli's critics, ill led. Discontent with his leadership culminated in February 1872, when at Lord Exeter's house at Burghley the wiseacres of the Party nodded over the failure of their leader; and his old colleagues, with the exception of Sir Stafford Northcote, but including Lord Cairns, met to disavow his leadership, and to plump for Lord Derby as his successor.

Although it is probable that no one ventured to give Disraeli the details of the cabal against him, he was not left for long in ignorance of its purport. Within a month his Achillean spirit burst into flame. A reception of unexampled warmth from the London populace, as he proceeded to St. Paul's to commemorate the restoration to health of the Prince of Wales, showed Disraeli that if Tory Society had been adversely influenced by the critics of *Lothair* the people had been amused. He had become a popular favourite. His courage rose and his determination hardened.

While intimating that he was prepared to cede the leadership and retire below the gangway—a suggestion that sent a shiver down the backs of his colleagues—he chose Manchester for the delivery of a speech that placed his leadership beyond question. He had himself taken in hand the reorganization of the Conservative Party in the constituencies, and had chosen Eldon Gorst as his working organizer.

The Manchester speech was delivered to the grouped Conservative Associations recently formed, the forerunner of the Caucus, which in after years another Imperial statesman, upon whom a large fragment of his mantle fell, instituted at Birmingham. The Manchester speech fixed for many years the creed of the Tory Party. Based on an active hereditary monarchy, an unreformed House of Peers, and an uncompromising Erastianism, Disraeli's contention was that the Constitution was the best available instrument for ensuring the progressive welfare of the people. In the forefront of Conservative policy he placed the people's health, and, transmuting a famous passage from the Vulgate, gave to his Party a motto in the phrase, "Sanitas Sanitatum, omnia Sanitas." Taunting Mr. Gladstone's administration with violence and plunder, he accused it of encouraging sedition.

But the field of domestic politics was not the only one he determined to traverse. Disraeli turned to foreign affairs. After ephemeral criticisms which have lost their interest, he gave his

audience the cue to the policy with which his last administration was to be identified. While repudiating turbulent and aggressive diplomacy, he counselled firmness and decision. He had been the lifelong opponent of Palmerstonian bluster. He warned his countrymen that Europe was no longer the Europe of Chatham and Frederick. The Queen of England had become the sovereign of the most powerful of Oriental states. The teeming populations on the other side of the globe were certain to exercise their influence in due time over the distribution of power. The United States of America already threw lengthening shadows over the Atlantic. These were vast and novel elements in world polity. He acknowledged that the policy of England in regard to Europe should be a policy of reserve, but proud reserve ; and he added his conviction that there never was a moment when the power of England was so great and her resources so inexhaustible.

When, a few months later, speaking of the Colonies—for they were not yet called Dominions—he maintained that self-government, when it was conceded, ought to have been conceded as a great policy of Imperial consolidation ; when he contended that it ought to have been accompanied by an Imperial Tariff, and by a military code which should have precisely defined the means and responsibilities by which the Empire should be defended, he had provided his political opponents with the caricature that went by the

name of Jingoism, and had furnished Mr. Chamberlain with an Imperial policy.

Lord Morley's reflection that Disraeli, when power fell into his hands, made no single move of solid effect for either social reform or Imperial unity, took no account of Disraeli's claim that high statesmanship is not always based on administrative action. Disraeli, a political seer in the line of the Hebrew prophets, is now acknowledged to have been a leader endowed with the imaginative gifts of Burke and Bolingbroke, but qualified by a political sagacity in which both were lacking ; and it cannot be denied that, judged by its fruits, Disraeli's policy, whether for good or evil, left a deeper mark upon the history of his country than the legislative enactments of his political rival. If it is true, as Sidonia observed to Coningsby, that the spirit of the age is the very thing that a great man changes, Disraeli may lay claim to the title.

Meanwhile, as his popularity grew, he was threatened with sorrow. His partner and companion for thirty-three years was slowly dying. His wife's illness was long and harassing ; it terminated in December 1872. To Lady Beaconsfield he owed ease and happiness. She had been the most discreet and faithful of friends throughout their married life. In his reply to a letter of condolence from Mr. Gladstone he wrote, " Marriage is the greatest earthly happiness when founded on complete sympathy. That hallowed lot was mine for a moiety of my existence, and I

know it is yours." These were not vain words. Without the companionship of woman Disraeli was lost. For, although he had friends, intimacy with a man was foreign to his nature. The riddle of his sentiment for the Forrester sisters is simply solved by the application of this test. His affection for Monty Corry was deep. "I never wanted you more," he wrote on one occasion, but he explains on another, in writing to Lady Bradford, how skin-deep this really was. He speaks of the Duc d'Aumale as his "most intimate friend," and yet their orbits in life rarely intersected. In writing to Sir Nathaniel Rothschild he often used endearing expressions, but they meant little more than a passing gust of affection. He was attached to Lord Barrington by many ties, but none of them strained at his heart. "My nature demands that my life should be perpetual love," he said in his youth. He meant the love of woman. Except for his wife's companionship, there never was a lonelier man. At Hughenden he seemed to me, a youthful observer, a solitary and pathetic figure.

Lady Beaconsfield, in a touching letter written years before but found by him after her death, urges him not to live alone, and earnestly hopes he may find some one as attached to him as herself.

Yet, like so many men of vivid imagination, he loved women without passion. He saw them, as he saw so many aspects of life and politics, as he wished to see them. His serio-comic, ironic-

ally mystic mind was free from cynicism. He was curiously lacking in visual sense of beauty, although the gorgeous appealed to his Oriental imagination. He certainly preferred his peacocks to birds of lowlier plumage; and, although the tradition of the primrose has been fastened upon him, there can be little doubt that his heart went out more freely to the bouquet of roses and orchids ornamented with humming birds sent him for presentation to the Princess of Wales when he entertained her at dinner. It was not physical charm that attracted him to his wife, who was twelve years older than he. Lady Chesterfield and Lady Bradford, the recipients of his ardent letters, were aged respectively seventy and fifty-five. Yet he writes to them both like a lover. Perhaps the secret lies in words he uses in one of his most love-lorn epistles to Lady Bradford. "Unfortunately for me my imagination did not desert me with my youth." Both these ladies were great ladies of the type Disraeli describes in the novels of his youth and age—charming, intelligent, unassertive, appreciative women, always beautifully dressed, but no longer beautiful. Disraeli was no fop or fool in old age, any more than he was a libertine in youth. But he loved women and their friendship. He treated every woman as if she were a queen, and he treated the Queen like a woman. He took endless pains—this was the secret, and a simple one, of his successes.

For some time after Lady Beaconsfield died

Disraeli was crushed by discomfort. His income, never adequate to his tastes, was materially diminished, for the greater part of it died with her. He left his sunny house in Grosvenor Gate, and lived in Edwards' Hotel, near Hanover Square; but even its associations with Lady Palmerston, which appealed to his sense of tradition, for it had once been her home when she was Lady Cowper, could not reconcile him to its dreariness. "I have no home," he wrote to Lord Malmesbury, "and, when I tell my coachman to drive home, I feel it is a mockery. Hotel life of an evening is a cave of despair." When at Hughenden he was always alone. For a whole month, he wrote to Northcote, he had not interchanged a word with a human being. He thought it a melancholy life, but he found society duller. A letter from Lord John Manners was like the sight of a sail to one on a desert isle. Days were spent looking through and arranging Lady Beaconsfield's correspondence. She had kept everything; and everything meant letters from every man famous in the literature and politics of Europe for thirty years. Metternich, Thiers, Brougham, "100. from Bulwer Lytton," he writes to Monty Corry, "as many from Stanley beginning with Trinity College; enough of George Smythe for three volumes and I dare say not a line in them not as good as Horace Walpole." The last letter from d'Orsay written just before his death, and many from Lady Blessington—what a *trouvaille* for the

skilful handling of a Sainte Beuve! Where are they now? I have never succeeded in tracing them.

But reaction was not long coming. On 13th March 1873 Mr. Gladstone resigned. Disraeli's political acumen was as sure as his historical knowledge. He once said to Sir William Harcourt, "You and I are the only men in the House who know the history of our country." Judged by the test of Stubbs or Freeman this claim may have been excessive, but there is another standard. Three men were once discussing the pre-eminence of historians; two of them were Mommsen and Lord Acton, who both agreed that the palm would be rightly awarded to Macaulay. According to this curious dictum, which places historical vision on the highest plane, Disraeli's claim to historical knowledge is made good, and he applied it in action. On historical grounds he declined to take office in a Parliament in which his opponents were in a majority, and he refused to be responsible for a dissolution. Mr. Gladstone resumed the government. But the *hallali* was sounded in a famous letter to Lord Grey de Wilton, the candidate for Bath, in which Disraeli accused the Ministers of having for five years harassed every trade, worried every profession, and assailed or menaced every class institution, adding that the country had "made up its mind to close this career of plundering and blundering."

All this happened in October 1873; and in the

early days of February 1874 there was, as Disraeli wrote to Monty Corry, "a panic at Brooks": When shortly afterwards he formed his Government, it was the strongest, he said, since Pitt. The hitch, the doubtful point, the adherence of Lord Salisbury to the leader he had once mistrusted, was removed. The two men, so antagonistic in origin and temperament, met and were reconciled. Lord Salisbury was admitted to be the most potent of Disraeli's colleagues with the exception of Cairns. Lord Derby resumed his old place at the Foreign Office. Whether the Cabinet was as strong and capable a one as has ever taken over the government may be disputed. That it was compact—the Cabinet did not exceed twelve—that it contained, besides Disraeli, two men of commanding character in Cairns and Salisbury, is indisputable, while Gathorne Hardy as a parliamentarian and administrator was far above the average; but Lord Carnarvon, high-minded as he was, proved himself by his perverseness to be a source of weakness to his colleagues; and Lord Derby's intellectual gifts were crossed by indecision and instability that nearly proved fatal to Disraeli and to the Government. But these perils were hidden from all men when the Ministry was formed, and they were removed before the dangerous crisis occurred which, in hands less firm than those of Disraeli and Salisbury, would have precipitated the nation into a war with Russia.

The Government was formed easily and

smoothly. Disraeli consulted no one but the Queen. To those of us who remember the painful birth of Mr. Gladstone's Government in 1880—the cabals and secret conclaves, the clash of ambitions, the pleadings and menaces employed, and the compromises demanded and obtained—the story of Lord Beaconsfield's administration is of profound interest. It illustrates the power of leadership in a statesman whose firmness equals his perspicacity.

Disraeli's life had reached its zenith, but the moment of his triumph became that of his decline. He had achieved the glittering successes that Sidonia had prophesied, but his health, never strong, was beginning to fail. A visitor to Hughenden found him gazing into the fire and murmuring, "Dreams, dreams, dreams." They had been and were still the staple of his life. But his heightened consciousness was a symptom of decaying strength. He was old and sick. So worn a man had never held the post of Prime Minister in this country. Counting by years he was ten years younger than Palmerston when, as First Minister, he could vault a gate at Broadlands to test his vigour, or Gladstone when he felled trees to calm his troubled spirit. But I who often had occasion to see Lord Beaconsfield during the years that followed was harassed by the waxen face, the glassy eyes, the infirm gait of the Minister whose aspect recalled the physical decrepitude of the half-resuscitated Chat-ham. He was happy, however, in having once

more a home in London. He had recently acquired No. 2 Whitehall Gardens, a house with a quiet outlook over the river, which has since been the offices of the Committee of Imperial Defence and of the Cabinet. During the nine years preceding the Great War, when my avocations took me so frequently to the room occupied by Disraeli during the greater part of his Premiership, I could never forget that we were all of us engaged upon undoing the work upon which at Berlin Bismarck and he had strenuously laboured. Fortunately for the great, their fame is less transient than their achievements.

Disraeli had found in the two correspondents, to whom most of the delightful letters written during the later years of his life are addressed, a companionship that balanced the harassing cares of office. Above all, he had conceived for the Queen, in the autumn of her reign, a romantic sentiment not unlike that which had absorbed Lord Melbourne in her spring-time. The Fairy, as he calls her with Spenserian emphasis, was the corner-stone of his policy and the solace of his ministerial days. Disraeli's letters to the Queen form a literature of their own. They are not the formal letters of a Minister to a sovereign. They are the letters of a man of Byzantine genius written daily, sometimes oftener, with deep respect to an intellectual equal, intimate, but never familiar. As an example in what the French call *tenue* and in literature they are beyond criticism. The Queen's replies are equally interesting. No

stress should be laid upon their style. The Queen wrote in maturity much as she wrote as a schoolgirl. It is the penalty nearly every one pays who speaks and thinks in three or four languages. Style is indigenous, and the best writer of a language is he who is familiar with none but his own. Going behind the form of the Queen's letters to their substance, the reader discovers what Disraeli found—a character as strong as his own, and a logical clarity of purpose before which he salaamed.

In the beginning of the Balkan troubles the Queen seriously doubted the wisdom of her Minister's policy. She was unconvinced of the perfidy of the Russian Emperor, whom she liked, and she was moved by the sorrows of the Christian subjects of the Sultan. But, when that policy had become the fixed policy of the nation, the Queen realized, long before it became clear to Lord Beaconsfield, that, once adopted, the policy of resistance to the Russian assault on Constantinople must be maintained to the end, and that Lord Derby's ambiguities and scruples were compromising the chance of peace.

In the correspondence between Lord Beaconsfield and the Queen, the Minister, although his letters are a literary delight, assumes a subordinate rôle. His embarrassments were manifest. Being a politician, he had to play the game of politics. It is certain, however, that throughout the hazardous negotiations with Russia his resolve was strengthened by the Lady on the

Throne, who even threatened to abdicate should her Minister prove too flexible in the hands of his nerveless colleagues.

There are still some of us who remember the turmoil of those years that preceded the Berlin Congress. In this country Schouvaloff was the centre of the diplomatic ring. He was typically Russian. Sprung from a handsome and gifted family, he used every artifice with a skill that recalled the diplomacy of the eighteenth century and the morals of the Court of Catherine. His influence at Knowsley was one of the social scandals of the time, although it was based on nothing more than an honourable but rather silly belief in the pacific influence of private intercourse. But Schouvaloff's machinations were a contributing cause to the fall of Lord Derby, whose political prospects vanished from the hour of his resignation. Lord Carnarvon—or Twiddles, as he was called in the highest spheres—was a loose gun in the ship of State. Until he was pushed overboard there was imminent danger of a catastrophe. As often before, during the time when he sat as Lord Cranborne in the House of Commons, Lord Salisbury baffled the Tadpoles and Tapers, and alarmed the Prime Minister. His handling of the Turks when sent on a special mission to Constantinople, his openly expressed hostility to their rule, his sympathy for the Gladstonian denunciations of Bulgarian atrocities, combined to terrify his colleagues and weaken their determination.

At this moment there flared up in Society that detestation of Mr. Gladstone to which Lord Beaconsfield gives unduly strong expression in a letter quoted by his biographer, which, although it displayed the natural exasperation of a Minister hard pressed by furious and unscrupulous criticism, did not represent Lord Beaconsfield's reasoned judgment. It soon, however, became apparent to the nation that 'Turkish atrocities' was not the vital question at issue. Moderate men of all parties realized that the interests of Great Britain were gravely compromised by the design of the Russian Emperor to occupy and hold Constantinople. From the moment when this became evident to Lord Salisbury he never wavered ; and thenceforward his support of Lord Beaconsfield made the position of the Minister safe and the policy of the Government secure.

Although Lord Beaconsfield had lost the daily companionship of her who said with truth, that while she was aware he had married her for her money, if he had to marry her again it would be for love, he had found solace in the friendship of Lady Bradford and her sister. He began to move again in Society after a restricted fashion. He liked small dinners, "not more than the Muses, or less than the Graces." Banquets bored him. A Prime Minister had no social precedence in those days; and he more often than not found himself sitting at dinner between two men, unless his hostess, like clever

little Lady Holland, instructed a faithful groom of the chamber to place him, as he walked in last and alone, next to Lady Bradford.

He enjoyed social badinage because he loved to contrast the hidden motive with the public pretext of transactions; and he picked up scraps of gossip which, according to Lady Augusta Stanley, he "cooked up to amuse the Queen." He paid a few country visits, and once again he renewed his "uncomfortable experience" at Balmoral, although his Oriental blood froze in the Highlands. Unless one of his intimate friends was asked to meet him, he was not happy in country houses. He mentions in a letter how tiresome he found a certain house-party at Longleat in the autumn of 1874. I was present as a youth at the time, and I noticed his prolonged silences at dinner—only an occasional flash—yet there were pleasant people present. During that visit the Prime Minister was silent and ill-humoured, and showed temper to Lord Malmesbury, his Privy Seal, whom he ordered about like a schoolboy. It was on this occasion, when walking in the garden, that, remarking on personal attacks and political hatreds, he said to me, "I never trouble to be avenged, but, when a man injures me, I put his name on a slip of paper and lock it up in a drawer. It is marvellous how men I have thus labelled have a knack of disappearing."

But age and disease were creeping upon him, and in less than two years he suddenly

quitted the House of Commons without a word of farewell. The secret of his translation to the Upper House was well kept. There is a letter extant written by Lady Derby to my father in August 1876, in which she says that "Dizzy desired to retire altogether, and was only dissuaded by the strongly expressed wishes of the Queen." His interest in Young England had never flagged. Before leaving the House of Commons he had noted and commented upon two members of the House who were destined to achieve fame. Of Hartington's leadership of the Liberal Party he spoke with warm commendation. He liked the blundering sincerity and honest dealing of his new opponent. "Harty Tarty," he wrote, "was sensible, dullish, and gentleman-like." No sooner had Lord Randolph Churchill delivered his maiden speech than the Queen was told of the new star. "Impudent, which was a matter of small importance in a maiden speech," he called it, remembering perhaps his own; but he added that the House was surprised and captivated by Lord Randolph's energy, natural flow, and impressive manner, "with self-control and study he might mount." Consummate parliamentarian as Disraeli was, he rarely misjudged a situation or a man. He would stand in the lobby with his back to the fire, noting everything and everybody, and exchanging shots with any member, like "Geordie Hamilton" or the "Squire" (Harry Chaplin), both of whom he loved, who had the boldness to approach him.

Had he seen an article in the *Nineteenth Century*? "No, my dear boy, I hate your new magazines. You will live to see the time when everybody can scribble and nobody write." For forty years, and especially during his long leadership of his Party, he was rarely absent from the House of Commons. He was for ever on the watch. But in those days the House of Commons, and not the Government, governed the country. "Autres temps, autres mœurs."

The clever stroke by which the control of the Suez Canal passed to England, the ludicrous fuss over the Royal Titles Bill, the glowing pageantry of the Berlin Congress, are the final scenes of Lord Beaconsfield's career. When the Queen made one of her rare appearances, wearing for the first time her Crown as Empress of India, Lord Beaconsfield stood on her left hand holding aloft the sword of State. As Archbishop Tait remarked, "All seemed founded on the model, What shall be done to the man whom the king delighteth to honour?"

It was forty years, the mystic number of his race, from the day when the young Disraeli had first taken his seat in the House of Commons. Now from the red benches of the House of Lords he could survey the past. An aristocracy, he once said, hesitates before it yields its confidence, but it never does so grudgingly. Now he was its leader and its master. Like any prophet of Israel he had foretold it all. His novels bristle with Disraeli's prophecies, and record their ful-

filment. *Tancred* had shown the vision of a young Queen crowned as Empress of India, and her widening dominion over Egypt and Mesopotamia; while fifty years before the battle of Mukden this crystal-gazer had seen no reason why Japan should not become the Sardinia of the Mongolian East. He had educated his Party. Like a Tudor King, his policy was to establish a balance between the dull Party and the rash Party. Like Fabius Maximus, by bearing patiently the insolence and folly both of the common people and his colleagues, he had never proved himself eminently serviceable to his Party. He had never used the arts of the demagogue, or put his head under his girdle to please the plebs. Relying upon the conservative instinct, so ingrained in the English people, knowing that the depository of power is always unpopular, and that the long reign of his critics was bound to end, he had waited. When he induced his Party reluctantly to yield a measure of reform, he won his point by explaining to them how impolitic it is to make it the interest of any powerful class to oppose the institutions under which they live. It is difficult to determine whether he was more eminent as a prophet or a politician.

Lord Beaconsfield's resolve to go to Berlin triumphed over the opposition of the Queen, who feared for his health, and of his colleagues, who mistrusted him as a linguist. His constitution stood the test, and his French was not put to the proof. His arrival was awaited with curiosity. It

was at once recognized that at the Congress only two men counted, Bismarck and Beaconsfield. I heard Odo Russell once describe to a party assembled at Knowsley, the high comedy as it was played when any conflict arose between these two elderly stars. If Bismarck was foiled, he would rise from the table saying, "I'm off to Kissingen"; while, if Dizzy could not gain his point, he ordered a special train. Georg Brandes met him in crossing the Wilhelmsplatz on the narrow path between the flower-beds leaning on the arm of Monty Corry on his way to the Congress. He noted the slow steps, and saw that over-exertion was written on every line of his face, while he acknowledged the respectful salutations of the German citizens with a weary mechanical movement.

"As I gazed into the pale and haggard face I thought of the conflicts this man had passed through, the disappointments, the agonies he had suffered, and the lofty courage with which he had triumphed over them all. I thought of his genuine sympathy with the common people and with the oppressed race to which he was never ashamed to belong, and I saw him in a more attractive and ideal light."

The *mise-en-scène* of the Congress is described by Lord Beaconsfield in the letters he wrote to the Queen. The Dynasts of Berlin, like those of more recent days, were busy framing treaties and readjusting the parts of that inorganic organism which goes by the name of Europe. Bismarck

and Beaconsfield were the dominant actors in the play, and the living world applauded their successes, while the Spirits of the Pities and the Years stood near, silently recording their failure.

The Berlin Treaty was made to be broken. Few of its provisions were intact in August 1914—while now not a fragment remains. On Lord Beaconsfield's return he was smothered with flowers. The Queen bestowed on her favourite Minister the Order of the Garter. She offered him a dukedom. No adulatory phrase was spared him. Society, as he once had said, kissed his feet. Did his ironic spirit travel for a moment into that wide field between obvious seriousness and downright sarcasm, as Leslie Stephen called it, where the readers of Disraeli's novels may interpret his meaning as they please? He must have remembered the struggles of his long life against the animosities and ridicule of all these fine people. "What," Coningsby had asked, "is an individual against a vast public opinion?" "Divine," Sidonia had replied; and Lord Beaconsfield could, after the experience of more than thirty years, have found no simpler answer.

~~There are~~ many lessons to be learnt from this man's mystical prophecies and sagacious reflections. The lesson he learnt at Berlin, so he said, was that "neither the Crimean war, nor this horrible devastating war which has just terminated, would have taken place if England had spoken with the necessary firmness." How vain are the lessons of history and the reflections of

statesmen! It is the fashion to decry the statesmen of the Victorian era, and to depreciate its philosophy, literature, and art. The Elizabethans in their turn suffered at the hands of the Stuart poetasters. But his biographer has shown Lord Beaconsfield, the Dizzy of the nineteenth century, to have been great in literature and statecraft. It may justly be claimed for him that his fancy influenced the policy of England.

## V

## DEVONSHIRE HOUSE

A WRITER who had inherited the style of the greatest of Whig historians spoke of the Whigs looking down from the heights of Devonshire House with aristocratic indifference upon their growing unpopularity and the mediocre political quality of the class that was to succeed them. The hauteur of the Whig families, their exclusiveness, their vast territorial possessions, their intermarriages, and their skilful use of the earlier writings of Mr. Burke had enabled them to exercise an influence upon the life of the nation which interludes of Tory administrations did little to disturb. The eloquence and delinquencies of Charles Fox that would have made him a successful leader in the twentieth century were rendered nugatory by fears begotten of the Revolution in France, so that, in spite of his magnetic powers of popular appeal, the oligarchy which he represented was given its death-blow by the "schoolboy" Pitt. Through the succeeding years these fears weakened when France was seen to be sterilized by the rule of the Bourbon princes. The authority of the Whigs revived for a period.

But in 1832 the Duke of Wellington had,

according to Disraeli, pronounced a funeral oration over the old constitution modelled on the Venetian, which had governed since the accession of the House of Hanover, and 'out of the cauldron' of 1846 there emerged gradually the Conservative and Liberal Parties, together with that curious amalgam called Peelites, who were destined to influence politics in England for two generations.

Not long after the old Duke's funeral oration there was born to the Earl of Burlington, head of the younger branch of the notable Whig family of Cavendish, a son, Spencer Compton, Lord Cavendish, known by his intimates to the end of his life as "Cav," known best to the nation by his courtesy title of Lord Hartington, who finally became eighth Duke of Devonshire. He inherited the characteristics and the vast possessions of a family which for five centuries had, with slow and cumbrous pertinacity, accumulated wealth and influence by the honest method of prudent marriages. Cavendish after Cavendish had wedded heiress after heiress, until, at the death of the Duke of Devonshire in 1858, innumerable estates in England and Ireland passed to the Earl of Burlington, himself a descendant of the fourth Duke, together with the dukedom and the headship of the family. Apart from their territorial influence, the Cavendishes had, like so many English families of note, been undistinguished. Here and there, amid the turmoil of politics, a Cavendish emerges into the

half light of history. One or two of them come momentarily to the surface of English life as politicians of some weight, as scientists of some attainment, or as rakes and gamblers. Heavily heaving their way into the marriage-markets of the aristocracy, they achieved social influence and political power. . If undistinguished, they were never obscure, and their honour remained untarnished by betrayal or mean trafficking through the corruption of the two centuries which preceded the birth of the Cavendish who was destined to refuse, on three separate occasions, the office of Prime Minister. The sixth Duke of Devonshire died unmarried. He was a *grand seigneur* of a type well known at the end of the Napoleonic wars. He had travelled over Europe, collected statues, amassed coins, and purchased fine editions of classical books. He spoke and wrote French with a facility of which, he was proudly conscious. His parties at Devonshire House reflected his cosmopolitan habits, and invitations to them written by himself in a fine hand resembling that of Sam Rogers, of which I possess several examples, were sought for with passionate avidity by the chaperons of marriageable daughters.—He was an amateur of beautiful faces and beautiful things. His successor, Lord Burlington, a scholar and a recluse, placed Second Wrangler and high in the Classical Tripos at Cambridge, had, it was said, never recovered from the shock. Shyness and reserve had settled down upon him. His bowed figure tacked into a room

like a vessel finding an intricate channel. But his judgment was clear, his heart generous, and his feelings, especially for his children, warm and deep. I cannot recall a household more closely knit together than that of Devonshire House in the 'eighties, where I passed so many days of the last century. There lived within its precincts at that time Hartington, whose suite of rooms was on the ground floor, opening into the garden; Lady Louisa Egerton his sister, her husband and family, and, when in London, Lord and Lady Edward Cavendish and their three sons. Devonshire House, sombrely ornate, its fine pictures hung but not displayed, had none of the ostentatious glamour of a modern mansion. It framed with singular appropriateness the Cavendish faces of its inmates. The faded damask on the walls, the tarnished gilding, the quiet rooms opening one from the other, typified the hubristic Whig tradition. The passages and rooms were dimly lighted and there were but few bells. At Chatsworth and Hardwick, the ancestral homes of the race, none. Lady Louisa Egerton used to point out to me the stains on the green silk wall made by the heads of the powdered footmen who in the "late Duke's" time lounged in waiting, and whose yawns of boredom rang through the house. She herself was the last of the Whig ladies who used such Whig intonations as "goolden" for golden, "brasslet" for bracelet, "charrot" for chariot. These men and women, their dignified outlook

upon life, their restricted sense of its possibilities, and the whole house itself are part of a vanished world.

On his seventeenth birthday Cavendish, so his father thought, was a delightful boy. He was not sent to school, for the Duke had found school an unhappy place. Often, in days to come, Hartington regretted his father's caution, when he felt himself lacking in that ease of manner which in others he attributed to the early influence of Eton or Harrow. For the tutor set over him he had no dislike, although English composition he "hated mortally"; while to be sent from his home to live in a vicarage he thought "great humbug," and said so. But at Cambridge, when eighteen years old, with rooms under Wren's quiet cloister in Neville's Court, there were compensations. If Herodotus proved "bothering," Newmarket was within a drive, and Lord Burlington when he visited Cambridge noted that, while not reading quite as much as he had hoped, "Cav" was not idler than the rest of the young undergraduates of the day. When many years afterwards, as Chancellor of the University, the eighth Duke of Devonshire spoke to the *alumni* of Cambridge, he could not resist the platitude of regret for the idleness of his own youth, having "through life had to work with men who thought three times as quick" as he; yet he had no solid reason to regret the slow grinding of his Cavendish mind. By 1854 he had taken a fair degree, and three

years later, at the age of twenty-four, he was member for North Lancashire. At this time a beardless stripling, he was heavily framed and loose limbed. But it was a pleasant face with its square brow, strong set over frank and not unkindly eyes; stamped with the broad lower lip characteristic of his race. A fondness for field sports had developed in him. He rode to hounds hard and well, though not as brilliantly as Harry Chaplin or Lord Spencer. He shot with steady perseverance. Unlike his brothers, he drifted into the society of pretty women, and this habit grew upon him until he became spell-bound by the cleverest and most beautiful woman of her time, who thirty years later became Duchess of Devonshire. A recklessness of demeanour, a Whiggish hardihood in braving public opinion, a defiance of the strict conventions of high society, were noticed in this young Cavendish upon his entry into the London world. His reputation and his indifference to what men thought, justified the universal belief that the story of his wearing Confederate colours at a ball in New York during the autumn of 1862 was not an invention, but the natural outcome of the challenge of some Southern beauty who dared him to an action which put him at a disadvantage with his Northern hosts. But this lapse did not hinder a presentation to Lincoln. If Hartington had "never seen such a specimen of a Yankee" in his life, and found no reason to dispute the opinion common in Washington,

that the President was "about as fit for his position as a fire-shovel," the older man, so misconceived, gauged his visitor with shrewder vision. Lincoln prophesied a future for him which events did not belie. Hartington's sympathies, like those of his class, were with the South, and at Fredericksburg and Richmond he found men more to his taste than those he had left behind at Washington, while the "negroes on the plantations were not dirtier or more uncomfortable-looking than Irish labourers." He was tempted to speak in the House on his return and ask its members how "they could be so idiotic as to admire Lincoln and his Emancipation Proclamation." But his better judgment prevailed, and on his return he kept silence.

In many biographies the story may be read of those intervening years between the Crimean War and the fall of Lord Derby's rickety Government in 1859, when the Peelites and Whigs, estranged from Palmerston, secretly coalescing with the Tories, succeeded in establishing the two Parties subsequently known as Liberal and Conservative. Although the new Liberal Party was largely influenced by men who disliked Palmerston, hated Louis Napoleon, and quoted Mazzini, many of the Whig families, among them the Cavendishes, preferred to ally themselves to the Liberals than to their old Tory opponents. It fell to Lord Hartington, as the most prominent member of the Whig section of the Liberal Opposition, to move the resolution

of censure in the House of Commons which by thirteen votes destroyed Lord Derby's Government. It was on this occasion that Disraeli, writing to the Queen from the House of Commons, observed that "Lord Hartington spoke like a gentleman," a phrase which nearly twenty years later the same writer repeated to Lady Chesterfield in more homely style: "Harty Tarty did very well—sensible, dullish, and gentlemanlike." It was of this speech that Lowe said, "At last I have heard a proper Leader's speech: all good sense and 'no earnest nonsense,'" a reflection and a gibe levelled at Gladstone. In April 1863, when Sir George Cornewall Lewis died and Lord Ripon became Secretary of State for War, Hartington was appointed his Under-Secretary. Like Macaulay, Hartington had entered public life a Whig and a Whig he was determined to remain. Although unable to clothe his convictions in Macaulay's language, like Macaulay he understood Whiggism to mean a creed that registered the experience of the English upper classes during the four or five generations previous to Palmerston's advent to power. That creed, although he did not realize its implications, represented not the reasoning but the instinctive convictions generated by the dogged insistence upon their privileges of a stubborn, high-spirited, and individually shortsighted race. Like every good Whig imbued with the ancestral doctrine of the habitués of Holland House, Hartington was more inclined

to decide a point by authority than by abstract reasoning. Yet he was far from deficient in analytical power. He knew something of Burke, although he did not take him seriously. Burke's philosophy, which led him to see the illustration of a general law in every particular case, had never appealed to the Whig mind. Sound and manly, Hartington was indifferent to the higher intellectual interests, and he mistrusted their exponents. When he was chosen to lead the Liberal Party the cynics said it was natural that the House of Commons should prefer the son of a Whig Duke, even though he was a man of slow-moving mind and lethargic temperament; but they were obliged to admit that his sympathies were on the right side. Although his opinions were his own, the fruit of seed planted long ago by Cavendish ancestors, whose parentage—like the Cecils or the Hapsburgs—is so obvious in the male line, his career was the result of influences external to himself. Of ambition in the ordinary sense he had none. Willingness, not desire, to serve his country to the best of his capacity was part of his inheritance. Stolid determination to go through with the business in hand, and not delight in the struggle, kept him from indulging beyond a certain well defined limit his natural taste for sport and pleasure. Fortunately for him he had fallen under the spell of a remarkable woman. When Lord Hartington first saw Louise Duchess of Manchester she was in the hey-day of her beautiful

youth. Lord Redesdale—no mean judge of beauty in women—compared her to the “lovely Gunning, herself twice a Duchess.” Sir Charles Dilke, alone among those whose impressions of the Duchess of Manchester have seen the light, thought that her “strong Conservative prejudices and her want of clearness of head made her by no means a useful guide”; adding that it was always a wonder to him that “Lord Hartington’s strong common sense kept him from making the mistakes into which she always tried by her influence to press him.” Disraeli, on the other hand, writing in the same year to Lady Chesterfield, speaks of how amused he was, sitting next to the Duchess at dinner, describes her as an agreeable and “very clever woman,” and if he found her sometimes “noisy,” she was at the same time “delightful, looking and talking her best,” “the soul of everything”; concluding, with shrewder vision than Dilke, that while Hartington had a “good political nose,” it was to “Duchess Louise” that he owed his advancement, leadership, and success in political life.

The Duchess of Manchester lived at the corner of Great Stanhope Street, opposite Chesterfield House, and I well remember, on summer evenings, seeing the people gathered in the Park, standing on chairs in order to get a good view when she drove through Stanhope Gate towards what was at that time still called the Ladies’ Mile. In later years—it was in 1877—Disraeli,

in describing a dinner which he gave in White-hall Gardens, at which Lady Londonderry appeared "staggering under the jewels of the three united families of Stewart, Vane, and Londonderry," gives the palm to "Duchess Louise, who set everything on fire, even the neighbouring Thames. Her face still flushed with the Lincoln racecourse, her form in a spick and span new dress, scarcely finished, and her hair, à la Marie Antoinette, studded with diamonds, which, by the bye, were stuck in every part of her costume."

During at least a generation "the Duchess"—as she was called by everyone, from the Prince of Wales to that famous linkman who knew everything and everybody—took an easy precedence in Society, and exercised discriminating and impartial influence, Tory as she was by association and environment, over the last of the Whigs.

There were critical moments during Lord Hartington's leadership of the Liberal Party, and during the opening years of the Parliament of 1880, when he faltered on the brink of political action distasteful to him, and when he found in her encouragement and advice just the impulse required to safeguard his authority and career. In that decade which preceded Lord Beaconsfield's defeat and Mr. Gladstone's triumph, at the Saturday and Sunday feasts which made Strawberry Hill a famous centre of political and social intrigue, we youngsters used to smile at Frances Lady Waldegrave, who loved

to play Egeria to a rising statesman afterwards known as Sir William Harcourt, but no one ever treated other than with almost reverential gravity the friendship between Lord Hartington and the great lady who subsequently became Duchess of Devonshire. In her presence even Bernal Osborne lowered his eyes and Abraham Hayward curbed his poisonous tongue.

There was, it must be admitted, one occasion when the Tory atmosphere of Kimbolton influenced the action of the Opposition in the House of Commons. On the return of the English envoys from Berlin great pressure was put upon the Liberal leaders to censure the policy described by its author as that of "peace with honour." To his Party's pressure Lord Hartington refused to yield; no hostile resolution on the Berlin Treaty was moved in the House of Commons; and Hartington only gave vent to what Lord Beaconsfield called "a string of congratulatory regrets."

Unless a man be combative like Mr. Lloyd George, or thick skinned like Lord Castlereagh, he does well to keep clear of politics. Hartington was neither, and Lord Redesdale, who knew him well, has said how acutely he felt the false position in which Mr. Gladstone's fictitious retirement had placed him. I was a frequent witness of how he chafed under the counterblast of Mr. Gladstone's speeches during those years when he nominally and reluctantly led the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, well knowing that its

leadership was still vested in the statesman whose retirement had been little more than a mystification of his own elusive mind. 'Nothing but a rare and disinterested public spirit would have been equal to the sacrifice demanded of Hartington, who had accepted the leadership with reluctance, encouraged against his own inclinations, as Lord Morley puts it, to take a thankless and unpromising post. Hartington knew the difficulties ahead of him from the first, and, when he was approached by those who preferred him to W. E. Forster, he wrote to Lord Granville that the "nominal leadership, whoever might undertake it, would be an extremely thankless and unsatisfactory task." He was aware, when others apparently were not, that Mr. Gladstone's retirement was "nominal" only, and his good sense told him that "the difficulties and unpleasantness of the position seem to be ignored" by those who were urging him to come to the rescue of a Party that was "occupied in deplored not its own condition, but the deficiencies of its possible leaders." A picture in *Punch* of Hartington as a shepherd replying to Bright, who offers him a crook, "But, pray, master, where be the sheep?" exactly represented Lord Hartington's view of the situation that it was proposed he should hold. Small wonder that he wrote to Lord Granville, "The more I think of it, the more glad I shall be if the Party will consent to take Forster, and he will consent to take the place."

Although Mr. Forster may have had the advantages in talent, in authority, and in the gift of speech which have been claimed for him, the Party would have nothing to say to him as their leader. He himself describes in his *Diarie*s how he went away from an interview with Lord Granville with the leadership given up—not without a pang, but with full belief that he had done the right thing. Less than a year later the Duchess of Manchester, speaking of Mr. Gladstone, said to Disraeli, "that gentleman is only waiting to come to the fore, 'with all his hypocritical retirement,'" and Disraeli adds, "she hates him for good reason, and sees through him." But Hartington had no feeling of hatred for Mr. Gladstone, much as he suffered under him. It is not certain that Hartington's "grave, calm, slow-moving mind" was capable of hatred. His restraint under provocation was curious. But there came a time—it was late in the day, only a few months before the dissolution in 1880—when, writing from Sandringham, he suggested a formula which he urged should be put before Mr. Gladstone. "The near approach of a General Election," he wrote to Lord Granville, "makes it necessary to consider what is to happen. Would it be possible for you and me to form a Government in which I should lead the House of Commons? I do not think it would. If we are convinced," he said, "as I think we must be, that Mr. G. is the only possible P.M., it seems to me that it is only fair to the Queen,

to the country, to the Party, and to myself that this should be acknowledged at once."

But his colleagues were opposed to this view. Forster and Harcourt were furious. Lord Granville was uncertain and advocated procrastination. He quoted Lord Cottenham, who told Prince Albert that it was generally better for a man not to make a will, because it was so difficult for him to foresee the exact circumstances at the time his death might occur.

Disraeli's advice was followed. "My dear lord," he had said to Hartington, "as you grow older you will find that affairs of State develop themselves." Yet Hartington was right. The idea was grotesque, while the old huntsman carried the horn, that anyone but he could rally the pack. Nearly a century earlier Lord Grenville had said, "the person who showed the most sport would always be the real leader," and the House of Commons had retained its ancient characteristics in spite of the abolition of rotten boroughs and the eclipse of the Whigs.

The Duchess knew, though many of Hartington's colleagues would not admit it, that with Gladstone in the field Hartington had no chance. She would have agreed that John Morley was right in describing Hartington as the lineal descendant of Palmerston in his coolness on Parliamentary Reform, in his inclination to stand in the old ways, in his extreme suspicion of what savoured of sentiment or idealism or high-flown professions, but she knew, and often said in other

words, that he lacked Palmerston's view-halloa and the blast of his horn.

Until the debates upon the second reading of the Home Rule Bill of 1886 Hartington had never roused the enthusiasm of his followers. His leadership had been measured and stately, pre-eminently sane, but lacking emotion and fire. When he finally determined to vote against the Bill, when he refused to read it a second time, and then hung it up for six months, because, as he said to me in forcible language, "Mr. Gladstone and I do not mean the same thing," he displayed a vigour and powers of effective declamation in debate that no one knew him to possess. He then became no longer the nominal, but the real leader of a Party in the State. On a hundred important occasions he had been the spokesman of a Government and a Party, and yet until he sat down after his speech on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, no one on either side of the House knew what he could do. Suddenly the Whig remnant took charge of the helm. In London Society the followers of Mr. Gladstone were given the cold shoulder. Since the days of Bolingbroke, Party feeling had never been so bitter. "When people talk about the extinction of the Whigs, it seems as if that Party, instead of being extinct, has become all-embracing, for one knows nobody who is not a Whig." Thus had Disraeli written ten years before, but if he exaggerated the sentiment of London society in 1874 it was no exaggeration in 1886. "I had

never met Dizzy in a country house before last week," Lord Granville once said to Hartington, thus sharply drawn was the line between Party leaders during the greater part of the nineteenth century; but from 1886 onwards the social ostracism of Mr. Gladstone's followers was so drastic that only at Marlborough House was it reasonably safe to ask a Whig lady to accept the arm of a man who had voted for Home Rule.

Hartington was not, however, easily to be lured into the Tory camp. Randolph Churchill had urged Lord Salisbury to try, but Lord Salisbury, with a shrewdness not plain to his eager lieutenant, had replied, "I observe whenever Hartington has the chance he dwells with so much conviction on my rashness that I suspect I am more the difficulty than you." The fact was that Hartington recognized in Lord Salisbury the representative of a Party and of political principles to which he had been opposed all his life, a type altogether different from Lord Randolph, whose Churchill blood, like that of his illustrious ancestor, ran blue and red by turns.

Hartington's political respectability shrank from the alliance to which common sense clearly pointed. He represented the respectability of the Whigs, as Northcote had represented years before the respectability of the Tories. Lord Randolph was by temperament fidgeted by a quality that he in common with Disraeli did not possess. "I wholly sympathize with you all,"

Disraeli had said to the Fourth Party, "because I was never respectable myself." When Lord Randolph resigned and Hartington, summoned home from the Côte d'Or, arrived in London to be offered by Lord Salisbury the post of Prime Minister, he refused. Mr. Gladstone had prophesied that he would refuse: Mr. Gladstone understood the "respectability" of the Whig statesman who could not bring himself to take the lead of the Tory Party, although he might quite well consent to serve alongside of it in the ranks. And the Duchess also understood. "Hartington," she said, "has always been a Liberal." He could act with Tories for a well defined objective, but he was sincere and truthful. He could not bring himself to go back upon the principles he had slowly and calmly absorbed into his blood amid the faded glories of Devonshire House. He was politically incapable of persuading himself that he was not a Whig—of the lie, in short, of which Plato said the liar is unaware because it is inside the soul. When Mr. Gladstone said that Hartington was a man of unusual strength and ability, but that before becoming Prime Minister he required more training as a House of Commons leader, what he should have said was that Hartington required more flexibility of conscience, without which few men, perhaps no man, may rise to the highest place in a State like ours.

It was the knowledge that he lacked, and that Mr. Gladstone possessed, this qualification that

helped him, before any of his colleagues in the inner councils of the Liberal Party, to come to the conclusion that Mr. Gladstone, and not he, was designated as the successor to Lord Beaconsfield. He was conscious in a higher degree than any statesman of his time of what he could do, and what he could not do. . He was under no illusions about himself. He was too proud to be self-depreciatory; and his penetration was almost exasperating in its clearness.

When faced with the necessity of delivering an address at Edinburgh as Lord Rector, he would not choose a subject or frame the first sketch of his speech, and imposed the task upon me. But once my draft was in his hands, although it dealt largely with the influence of Edinburgh at the end of the eighteenth century, a subject that was new to him, his amendments and interpolations were characteristically weighty and stamped the address as his own. "It is to be read," he wrote to me, for I was then his Private Secretary (September 1878), "by taking your notes as the foundation and inserting the pages I have marked. I wish you would put in something about the proscription of the Whigs in Edinburgh, as I cannot find either Jeffrey's *Life* or Cockburn's *Memorials* here" (Holker). Although he was not accustomed to lay stress upon it, his hereditary connection with the Whigs was a ruling factor in his judgment of political matters.

"I wonder," he wrote to me at this time,

"whether your host [Lord Derby] will talk any politics with you. I believe he is quite ready to join us. If he should, I do not think there would be any harm in your mentioning the Leeds invitation, and my refusal. My reason against going was not so much the fear of frightening or offending old Whigs, as unwillingness to sanction, or be supposed to sanction, an organization [the Caucus] which may become a very powerful one, but which is altogether independent of and outside the control of the official element of the Party."

A little later he himself was Lord Derby's guest, and again he wrote to me:

"I got back from Knowsley yesterday evening, much exhausted and with a bad cold. You are right in supposing that the Friday speech at Liverpool was not a successful one. The fault appeared to be that I attempted to go over too much ground and too fully, with insufficient preparation ; that is to say, there had been plenty of preparation but I had not taken kindly to the work. Speaking with a cold also rather tired me and I missed most of my points. It was decidedly dull, and I could see that the audience thought so, although they behaved wonderfully well. The principal people also seemed to be satisfied. The meeting on Saturday was an extraordinary sight ; but the effort of speaking was so great that it was impossible to say much, even if I had been prepared for another considerable speech, which I was not. Altogether, I came away rather more

depressed than usual; and I only hope that I shall be allowed some peace now. . . .

"I had not much time to be bored at Knowsley, as I was hard at work all Friday morning and away in Manchester all Saturday. The evenings, however, were not lively, and I don't think I should ever get on much with Lady D. I took a long walk on Sunday morning with him, and we talked politics all the time. I am not at all sure that with a little more acquaintance we should not get on very well. I do not think that he means to join us at present, but is evidently anxious to be on the best terms with us; and I think that his advice and wonderfully clear judgment will be of great use to us in home questions. I doubt his ever being a good Foreign Minister."

Another quotation from these letters, so balanced and reasoned, written to a young private secretary, for I was not so very long out of my teens, which show Lord Hartington in a light that must be new to those who think of him as idle, blasé, indifferent, and bored, forced into political life against his will by birth and circumstances.

From Sandringham he wrote (December 1879) :

— "I am very sorry to have missed Harcourt at Chatsworth, as there is certainly much to be talked over. I cannot tell what may be the effect of Mr. G.'s speeches as to votes in England or Scotland, but there is no doubt that the effect of the whole proceeding will be considerably to increase the difficulty of the management of the

Party. Many have been always looking to his return to the leadership, and when he exhibits such extraordinary energy and activity, and at the same time puts forward a programme on every conceivable point of policy, they will naturally ask what hinders his return. And I am much inclined to ask it myself. It is not a question whether it is or is not desirable in the interest of the Party, but whether anything else is possible. I doubt whether any Liberal Prime Minister except Gladstone is now possible, and if this is the case, it becomes a question whether an attempt ought not to be made to induce him to resume his proper position before next session. I know that some others beside myself are of this opinion, and it will have to be well considered. We have had some very good shooting here, and the party is as pleasant as could be expected. Of course, I am in a hotbed of Toryism, and am made responsible for many of Mr. G.'s sins as well as my own. I think you may as well take up to London any papers and books which appear worth taking away, as I shall be in town before I am back at Chatsworth. I am afraid you must have had a cold drive to Hardwick."

In these days of typewriters and golf it would be thought strange for statesmen to find time or inclination to write so fully and intimately to their young private secretaries. But perhaps Hartington was playing a part, *malgré lui*, in the fulfilment of that Whig tradition that the young should be trained up and encouraged, a

tradition which has passed, or is passing, away. He could write, however, in lighter vein, and his postscripts nearly always dealt with matters that interested him and me at least as much as the in-and-out running of Mr. Gladstone.

"Witchery has been conducting herself in an extraordinary manner here. Having been beaten a long way on Tuesday, the boy was told yesterday to ride her all the way from the start, and at the same weight she left them all standing still in the mud. She won very nearly as easily to-day over a short course. I had only £50 on her yesterday, but the price was good."

And again :

"I hope you had a good time at Chantilly on Sunday. I am sorry to say Frank Westmoreland put your £25 on Rylstone and the rest on Falmouth, which Porter fancied very much. Rosebery has not won a large stake not more than eighteen or twenty thousand, of which he took twelve thousand to a thousand at Doncaster about his lot."

Apathetic as he always seemed to be at moments which in most men strike responsive fires, I often saw him tremble with excitement as the horses began the final rise of the Rowley Mile at Newmarket and his straw jacket was seen to be in the van. But he was not the fine judge of racing which his balanced mind and watchful temperament might have led one to expect. He lacked that quickness of eye which is inseparable from fine appreciation of the race-horse extended and of the jockey's effort. Yet

he was himself a bold and safe rider to hounds. "I am prepared," said Lord Granville, when the retiring Liberal Cabinet had been branded as a pack of muffs, "to challenge the present Ministry to put up their best men against a like number of the defunct Liberal Government for a ride across country." If the challenge had been accepted Lord Granville was prepared to select Lord Spencer, Charles Wood, the present Lord Halifax, and Hartington.

Such a challenge is not likely to be repeated. These statesmen belong to a class who were as much at home in a gallop over Leicestershire pastures as in a stroll through the Division lobbies; a class that could send to India a Viceroy, like Rolly Melgund, straight-hearted and gallant, who negotiated with careless ease the fences at Aintree and treaties with the Ameer of Afghanistan; a class that, in more recent years, produced a Prime Minister—Lord Rosebery—who, if he failed to lead the heterogeneous Party at his back, succeeded in leading in a Derby winner.

Of this class Hartington was for half a century the most conspicuous, the most envied type. His lot was cast amid noble, even gorgeous surroundings, but he was not luxurious. The rooms he occupied were ascetic in their plainness. Although no one looked more dignified, when, blue-ribboned, he stood with his Duchess at the head of the awkwardly winding staircase at Devonshire House, he dressed as a rule with extreme simplicity. He rose late, and was seldom

to be seen before ten o'clock taking a meagre breakfast on a small table placed next his uncomfortable escritoire. He stalked to bed in the small hours; generally after a game of bridge, which he played with vexatious deliberation and mediocre skill. He would leave the card-room at the Turf Club only just in time to be late for dinner, however exalted the rank of his host. When a Marlborough House dinner was kept waiting, Hartington was invariably the cause of delay. His manner was a blend of curtness and courtesy. Perfectly at ease himself, he was often the cause of uneasiness in others. A certain hauteur which became him well had been grafted on to a naturally humble nature by the Duchess, who had been at some pains to force him to tidy his unruly hair. She atoned by her social gifts for all his shortcomings. For thirty years her ruthless beauty had dominated what was then Society. Never seriously challenged, she had reigned and ruled. The secret of her extraordinary success was perhaps due to a real benevolence that underlay a hardness of manner which was frequently mistaken for pride. She gambled with life, and loved to win, but she was open-hearted and invariably kind, without condescension, to young and even to absurd people. The splendour of the Duchess, of her daughters, her friends, and courtiers, was a stirring foil to Hartington, to the homeliness of his sisters and brothers, and to the Cavendish simplicity that clung round the sombre glories of Devonshire House.

The loyal friendship between Hartington and his relatives, their mutual attachment, seemed to me as solid a factor in their home life as the family portraits on the walls. Of its deeper aspects at solemn moments I had on many occasions a glimpse. No one who, as I did, saw Hartington on that Sunday which followed the day of Lord Frederick Cavendish's assassination could forget the stricken face, in such contrast to the impassive countenance which his friends and companions knew.

In the relations between him and his father, the deference of son to father and of father to son was unusual, and beautiful to the onlooker. He obviously cared deeply for his sister, Lady Louisa, and he was amused by and loved his sister-in-law, Lord Edward's wife, but the warmest place in his domestic affections was reserved for his brother Edward, who, of them all, was least of the true Cavendish type. When Lord Edward's three sons were small boys Hartington scanned them one day at luncheon, and then looking grimly at Victor (the present Duke of Devonshire), said, "He will turn out all right; he is the most like me."

There was a time in Hartington's career, perhaps the most troubled time, when he was smarting under the disappointment of Belpheobe's failure in the Oaks to fulfil her early promise, that his affections were centred upon his dog Roy, a collie of that broad-browed type which, like the Whigs, has now been superseded and forgotten.

Roy enjoyed the privilege accorded to his master of breaking every social rule; whether to Buckingham Palace or to the House of Commons, wherever Hartington went, Roy went too; and his habits, which were as leisurely as his master's, accentuated more than ever that utter disregard of time which was Hartington's most notorious characteristic.

Are such details as these interesting? That is one of the recurrent questions that every writer asks himself. The Venetian Ambassadors of the sixteenth century answered the question in the affirmative, and we are indebted to them for the minute portraits they drew of Tudor statesmen and courtiers which have brought to life the spacious days of Henry and Elizabeth. Lord Acton was of the same opinion. What is not interesting, Matthew Arnold said, is that which does not add to our knowledge of any kind; that which is vaguely conceived and loosely drawn; a representation which is in general indeterminate and faint, instead of being particular, precise, and firm.

Hartington's influence upon the politics of our country may have been great or small, according to the value that the historian places upon individual influence over the march of events. That he was a considerable political figure is not likely to be disputed. Cabinet office had not then been lowered in public estimation. Everyone interested in the history of their country can run through by heart the names of Sir Robert Peel's Cabinet

of 1841 or Mr. Disraeli's of 1874; but there is, perhaps, not a man alive who could name without a mistake Mr. Asquith's Cabinet of 1909. The test is equally applicable to any Cabinet since that date. It is not that the number of Cabinet Ministers has been doubled, but that they were and are so many of them entirely lacking in distinction. Mr. Gladstone's dictum that the next most serious thing to putting a man into the Cabinet was leaving a man out who had once been a member, implied a desire to maintain that high standard of Cabinet qualification which he believed to be essential to democratic government as he understood it. He attached more importance to the public virtue of the members of his Cabinet than to their "unity," of which so much has in later times been heard. "Talk of divided houses," said Chatham, "why there never was an instance of a united Cabinet! When were the minds of twelve men ever cast in one and the same mould?" All that Gladstone asked of his colleagues was common action and mutual support. He made no claim to hold their conscience in his keeping or to control their inner thoughts—otherwise it would have fared ill with Hartington.

And yet, with apparent inconsistency, intercourse between men on different sides in politics was much less common in those days than now. Mr. Disraeli and Mr. Gladstone seldom met in private, and, when they did, a distant bow was the only form of salutation. There have been

times when political passions were so fiercely roused that “public life was exasperated by hatred and the character of private life soured by political aversion.” But forty years ago Party exclusiveness, although it had begun to give ground, had not altogether yielded to the exclusiveness of fashion. At the great Whig houses, although a select number of Tories were to be seen, blue and yellow was the predominant blend of colour. At the great Tory houses no one expected to meet Mr. Gladstone or even the Duke of Argyll, Hartington belonged to a small category of chartered political libertines who were everywhere welcome.

At Strawberry Hill—Horace Walpole’s Gothic folly—Frances Lady Waldegrave kept open house every Saturday and Sunday throughout the summer months. We loved its luxury and the high standard of the talk to which we listened. This remarkable woman was the daughter of Braham, an actor of some mark. She married four times with much discernment. One of her husbands, Lord Waldegrave, left her Chewton and Strawberry Hill, together with an ample fortune. All these advantages she bestowed on Chichester Fortescue, a good-looking politician, not devoid of parliamentary gifts, whom she managed to convert into a Cabinet Minister and Peer under the title of Lord Carlingford. In her skilful hands Strawberry Hill became the centre of influence in the counsels of the Whig Party. Reputations were canvassed,

political manœuvres planned, alliances formed, decisions taken, while Lady Waldegrave, rouged to the eyes, her ever-dark and smooth head glistening beneath the chandelier, sat perched on a gothic settee in the octagon room under her hospitable roof. Wits and gamblers, poets and peers, mén on every rung of the political ladder, gathered round her as she held her court and her own with the wittiest of them all. Strait-laced Tories held aloof, but to her dinners and dances Society, led by the Prince and Princess of Wales, flocked eagerly. In those days, before the discovery of London by New York, a few American women, among them Lady Randolph Churchill and Mrs. Mahlon Sands, chosen for their beauty, chastened by their privilege, had begun to be admitted into the jealously guarded inner circles of birth and fashion. The standard was high, but they passed it triumphantly, and received their degree in the Arts of Society from the hands of Frances Lady Waldegrave. But the ordinary Sunday dinner was a formidable test of nerve in young and old. I very rarely missed these Sunday feasts, but I hated the ordeal. I hated it because I was young, and old Abraham Hayward's rapier was still keen, and he used it mercilessly; while Bernal Osborne whirled his mace in glee of battle, regardless of the victim's age or standing. It was a bracing air and everything was tolerated except fatuity or *mauvaise honte*. At Holland House, where a little grey lady with much gentle dignity had

succeeded to the magnificent "Madagascar" of an earlier generation, a wider net was spread, and when "all the world" was summoned to those historic gardens where Lady Sarah Lennox pelted Charles Fox with cherries, where Rogers' epigrams and Talleyrand's mordant wit had delighted their fathers, Hartington and his friends found themselves in what he called "a hotbed of Toryism." Lady Holland made no pretence of political exclusiveness. If she widened the circle from which the *habitués* of Society were commonly drawn, if she lured into her delightful library artists, writers, and musicians who gazed at Mrs. Norton, still beautiful, wheeling her chair round the Dutch garden, and got a peep at Ellen Terry among the roses, they were not asked to disclose the colours they wore at election time, or the precise epithet or tone they used when Disraeli or Gladstone was mentioned.

But of all the great Whig houses in those days, Grosvenor House stood first, if the applied test was the desire of young and old to be admitted within the circle of which Constance Duchess of Westminster was the life and soul. A daughter of the second Duke of Sutherland, she married early, and to the deep regret of many devoted friends, died before she had time to finish the jolly burst of laughter with which she entered and gladdened the world. Anybody who was anybody was to be seen at Grosvenor House; and nobody who was nobody crossed its threshold. From these festivities Hartington was

rarely absent, "the Duchess" never. That, with one exception, he enjoyed them, it would be difficult to assert. This exception was one summer afternoon, when on the lawn outside the Ball-room, among such a gathering of notables as even Grosvenor House had never before seen, Ormonde held his court—a serene disdain written all over him—but deigning to accept flowers from the hands of the fairest, and ending by snatching a carnation which someone had thrust into Hartington's buttonhole. Now the many coloured lights that glimmered in the garden have gone out; Reynolds' "Tragic Muse" is no longer enthroned at the end of the long room where the dancers danced; and Gainsborough's "Blue Boy," beneath whose drooping feather so many beautiful women and brilliant men sat, talked, and flirted, has gone overseas, exchanged, alas, for the successors of those fair women who, in very different houses, sit and talk and talk after a very different fashion.

To omit mention of the family of Rothschild would be to leave Hartington's social life incomplete. Whether at Alfred's in Seamore Place, or Leopold's at Ascot, or Nathaniel's at Tring, Hartington was a constant guest. And at Newmarket, at Palace House, he submitted only too gladly to the Latin *impromptus* of Lord Rosslyn and the crusty refusals of Colonel Forester to allow a cigarette to be lighted before he had finished his last glass of Château Lafitte, in view of the peaceful rubber to follow with his hostess,

Mrs. Leopold de Rothschild, and her sister, Mrs. Arthur Sassoon.

On October mornings, when through the mist near the Cambridgeshire stand long strings of hooded horses, led perhaps by Melton or St. Gatien, slowly passed and repassed—Mat Dawson, squat on his broad cob, Fred Archer lounging long-legged on a weedy two-year-old, Captain Machell standing humped against the keen air—suddenly would come into view Lord Westmorland, his hat cocked over his left ear, and Hartington looking for all the world as though he were about to move an amendment to the Address, but in reality as contented and happy as he could possibly be, although his two-year-old filly, so fancied for the Criterion, had been beaten in her trial. Here let us leave him. I prefer to think of him there, in his heavy riding-boots on a spot he loved, than on a cold pedestal outside the War Office, which he hated, clothed in the robes of the Garter, which he certainly never wore with pleasure.

He was the representative of political ideas that are abandoned. The only note of political passion he ever struck was for the unity of the three kingdoms, and against a policy which political parties have since agreed to accept. Lismore, his place in Ireland, was nearer to his heart than Chatsworth or Hardwick, that wonderfully preserved gem of Elizabethan architecture, hung with contemporary tapestries, archaically furnished with contemporary furniture, which

was his house from his coming of age until he succeeded to the dukedom.

As a man, the eighth Duke of Devonshire is remembered by a few and by his old Private Secretary as one who, because of inherited aptitudes as well as responsibilities, because of innate sense of duty to the Commonwealth, abandoned one half of the life he would have wished to lead for the sake of people who have forgotten that he ever lived.



## VI

### KHARTOUM

**I AM sorry you worry about me, for D.V. I am all right. I am comforted that if I try and do my best one cannot fail."**

**C. E. GORDON,  
from his last letter to me.**

### GORDON

**He cared for England, and he cared for youth,  
His given pledge punctilious in redeeming,  
His frank eyes ever sought the hidden truth,  
And not the outward seeming.**

**Austere he was not ; yet the pompous joys  
Of life to him seemed sadly unavailing.  
His Kings unsceptred were but lowly boys  
Across the ocean sailing.**

**He lived a gentle Christian knight,  
And died a martyr to imperious duty ;  
No sect could claim him ; no religious rite  
Enthralled him by its beauty.**

•

**He walked with God as a familiar friend  
For whom all friendship had a tender meaning ;  
God's word a field abundant, without end,  
Of precept for the gleaning.**

Life seemed to him a very simple thing,  
To reconcile conflicting maxims needless;  
Of conscience quick to feel the guiding sting,  
Of man's opinion heedless. . . .

Heroic deeds to him were commonplace,  
Among the crowding flatterers none could find him.  
A simple soldier. But the English race  
A hero have enshrined him. . . .

## VII

### STUDLEY ROYAL.

THE owner of Studley Royal, George, first Marquess of Ripon, descended on his mother's side, through the Earls of Buckinghamshire, from Hampden, traced his descent also through the Robinsons and Francis Worsley to Cromwell. He had inherited the facial disfigurement of his great ancestor. He was proud of it, and, although by no means devoid of aristocratic hauteur, he was so humble and lowly of heart that he would have resented eulogy untempered by honest criticism. Ruskin, discoursing on the Stones of Venice, remarked that restored history is of little more value than restored painting or architecture, and that the only history worth reading was written at the time of which it treats. He excepted such volumes of biography as contained letters, memoranda, and journals which had escaped destruction, declaring them to be the unrestored portions of the fabric of a man's life, indispensable to the psychologist and the student; pages that a cynical or sympathetic reader gladly turns to when weary of the "mere echoes" with which nine-tenths of an official biography are commonly

filled. From these unrestored fragments some scholar, delightful handler of prose and verse, is enabled to contrast the rapid and progressive deterioration in the class that from the time of Pericles acquired ascendancy at Athens, with a similar phase of English public life when the "mongers," as Aristophanes called them, began to take the place at Westminster of the landed classes and the families of ancient culture.

Lord Ripon was no "monger"; he belonged to the disappearing class. Born at No. 10 Downing Street; during the "transient and embarrassed" occupancy by his father of Walpole's old house, the delicacy of his boyhood as well as his father's prejudices deprived him of the advantages of a public school and university education. An only child, he grew up among the flat woodlands of Lincolnshire, in the old house of Nocton, which belonged to his mother and which, when times grew hard, he was forced reluctantly to sell in order to keep unhampered the Yorkshire property of Studley Royal. Nocton was famous for its lily-carpeted woods, and afforded enough sport to inspire the boy with that love of shooting, fishing, and entomology which neither a political career nor the Church of Rome disturbed. It was in the aloofness and stillness of the park at Nocton that he acquired the characteristic note of his character, that secretive habit which lasted him through life, of reading himself into opinions of his own and saying little or nothing about them

until they had become convictions beyond recall.

Nearing the age of fifty, when Grand Master of the English Freemasons, having quitted a few months earlier Mr. Gladstone's Government upon a political issue, he resolved to accept the sacramental authority of the Pope, no Freemason or old colleague or intimate friend had an inkling of his intention. Only Lady Ripon suspected, but even she was uncertain, although she was aware that for many months he had retired with volumes of Newman and the early Fathers to that austere bookroom at Studley which, sunless and fireless, he persistently occupied from early manhood to old age.

He married, in his twenty-fifth year, his cousin Henrietta Vyner, granddaughter of his uncle Earl de Grey. Lord Goderich, as Lord Ripon was then by courtesy called, was described by his friend Tom Hughes as a Revolutionary Radical and a Christian Socialist—terms equivalent to those of Bolshevik or Pacifist in more recent times. "You speak of rich, idle, and capitalists," his friend Charles Kingsley wrote to him; "I think putting the latter worthies into the same category with the two former may give needless offence." But Goderich's extreme views of universal brotherhood, denouncing as he did the right of aristocracies of talent, although they gave offence to his family, met with the warm approval of his friends Kingsley and Tom Hughes. Their effect upon Frederick Maurice,

the "Prophet" as he was called and the leader of the band, was very different. Goderich soon found that he had forfeited the good opinion of the Prophet; and, although he took this fall from grace good-humouredly, and although his democratic outlook on life remained unchanged, yet, when he stood for Hull, his opponents were quick to note the moderation of his election address, and the compelling forces which led him to ally himself with Liberalism of the tepid and orthodox type. If his family, if his Whig relatives, had hoped that his wife would exercise a restraining influence over his advanced opinions, their hope was never realized; for, although Lady Goderich professed no adherence to any religious group or political party, her opinions through life were in strong sympathy with those of her husband, and with the friends of "Christian Socialism," who were also her friends in the early days of her womanhood. When the centre of gravity of his political views shifted from Christian Socialism to political Radicalism her's remained fixed. In time she became the central figure of a small coterie of sincere earnest men. When I first knew her as the mother of my Eton friend, she was the intimate adviser of William Harcourt, during long years between the loss of his first wife and his second marriage. The Ripons had but one child, but children were gathered to Studley Royal from the highways. Tom Hughes and his children were often there. Dicky Doyle, who

should have been—as Mr. Disraeli said to me once at Longleat—Court painter to Queen Titania, was a constant guest; and his pictures are full of tiny fairy figures that he saw—but alas, we could not—running about the grounds of Fountains Abbey.

Lady Ripon was exceedingly wise. Not profoundly read, she knew everything worth knowing, careless of logic her mind flew along channels of sympathy and tenderness to the practical solution of the problem of the moment. Her sanity curbed the impulsive brilliance of William Harcourt—her rectitude was a guide to the ingenious tortuosities of Goschen; while her loving kindness often proved a balm for the sensitive misgivings of W. E. Forster. Always at the service of those who were in difficulty, she turned a colder aspect upon the successful and shrank from the triumphant. Her heart went out to lame dogs and winged birds—to men who, under a complacent or combative exterior, appealed in private for help. With Mr. Gladstone she was never intimate; much as she admired his gifts, staunchly as she supported his policy. He made no call upon her compassion. Although she had but one child of her own, children and the love of them supplied her with the satisfaction that other women found in amusement or society. Never happier than when she could lure to Studley her little nieces, the children of her brother Robert Vyner, she was deeply interested in another near relative, a small orphan girl of

singular mental poise and abnormal powers of enchantment in one so young—the only daughter of Julian Fane, afterwards Lady Desborough. Her parents had died young and her father's memory, embalmed in the hearts of a few devoted friends, was enshrined in a volume of verse edited by Robert, Lord Lytton. Ettie Fane was under the guardianship of Henry Cowper, her uncle; and the days at Studley were red-letter ones when, with his little ward's hand resting on his knee, his delightful restrained wit flashed across the company assembled there.

Perhaps of all her relatives and friends Lady Ripon loved best Henry Cowper and her eldest brother Clare. Clare's was a romantic figure. In his quiet home at Newby, presided over with singular grace by his beautiful old mother, Lady Mary Vyner, or at Newmarket, where he found much happiness, Clare Vyner excited among men and women that interest which refined and chivalrous sportsmen often inspire. Lord Hartington, as a rule so reserved, once said to me that of all the men he had ever known he liked Clare Vyner best. Lady Ripon and her brother had much in common besides their charming looks and gentle ways. Neither was robust in health and both lived aloof from the world of fashion, loving the society of intimate friends. Another motherless child found a home at Studley. Since the time when he was left with a baby son upon his hands, William Harcourt had turned to Lady Ripon for comfort and advice. His boy grew up under her

care. Hardly a day passed when Lady Ripon was in London that William Harcourt or his son was not to be found in Carlton Gardens. Lord Ripon moved with composure amid the hurly-burly of other people's children and grandchildren. His regular habits were undisturbed. Punctuality and order were for him sacred rites. If for a long day's sport in the Western Hebrides the hour of starting was fixed, Lord Ripon waited for no one. At Studley as the hands of the clock pointed to the hour he would stalk into dinner; and his guests must conform or follow. At ten minutes past ten, after his nightly cup of tea, he would rise from the round table at which he habitually sat and, taking a book under his arm, with a half comic, half ceremonious bow, would proceed to bed. Whether in the Isle of Harris or at Studley, whether in London or at Simla, the fixed routine was rigidly followed. He did not possess the remarkable skill of his son with gun, rifle, and rod, but he was attached to field sports and to his Yorkshire moors. For some years he rented from Lord Dunmore the stalking and fishing in the Isle of Harris, but it was always to Studley Royal that he returned with a glad heart when free from the political burdens that he himself had sought for as part of that duty to his neighbour which was the key-note of his life. He was a mediocre, perhaps overkeen, shot. He was an untiring walker for his build and weight. When sport over the moors at Dallowgill or through the stubbles of Hutton was not available,

he would stroll companionless for hours in the grounds of Studley Royal, through their series of ornamental lakes and eighteenth-century Gazebos, with which the taste of that period had adorned—or dimmed—the glories of Fountains Abbey. The house at Studley Royal was unpretentious, even plain, but the deer park and timber were beautiful; while Fountains Abbey, for dignity, massiveness, and romantic charm, is unsurpassed.

For fifty years, from 1859, when Lord Ripon became Under-Secretary for War, until 1909, when he died within a few months of his retirement from office, he was seldom free from the performance of high administrative functions; and throughout those years his honesty and patience, his single-mindedness, his love of order and accurate methods, whether at the War Office or in India or as President of the Council, made amends for any qualities of eloquence or genius which he lacked. By his subordinates he was respected, and by his colleagues he was sincerely liked. If he roused no enthusiasm he inspired confidence, which perhaps is a better thing. In India, to quote Lord Hartington's eulogistic phrase, he was so popular that there is no knowing what measure he could not carry, and "this popularity seems to me to have been earned in the most legitimate manner and entirely by the conviction which you and your colleagues have been able to bring home to all classes, that you

and your Government were devoting your whole energies to measures for improving the condition of the people and developing the resources of the country."

To have drawn from Hartington, sparing of praise, so warm a benediction was a feather in Lord Ripon's Viceregal cap. If, however, Hartington's words found an echo in India, they met with a different response at home. Lord Ripon was never a popular figure in England beyond the confines of his own West Riding. He belonged to a class of administrators who, from the accession of the House of Hanover down to the end of the Victorian era, served the country uncheered by popular favour, and without any reasonable hope of posthumous fame. As a rule a statesman who rouses no hatred inspires no enthusiasm. Palmerston, the mountebank as he was dubbed by the youthful band of Christian Pacifists who hated his swagger, was lamented, when he died, by Tom Hughes the pacifist who wrote "Poor old Palmerston—I can't help feeling as if I have lost a personal friend." His enemies had ended by loving his shrewdness, daring, insularity, and good nature. Among his successors Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield, and Mr. Lloyd George, because of the hatred or admiration that an electric personality stirs in the hearts of men, are sure of that fame which outside a library is denied to the average Prime Minister. In the long roll of those who climb to

high political office only a few are sure of posthumous fame; the rest are sure of nothing but four pages in a supplement to the Dictionary of National Biography.

Kingsley's admiration of Palmerston grieved Lord Ripon greatly. "I cannot doubt that Viscount to be the most unprincipled man in the House of Commons next to Disraeli," he wrote to Tom Hughes, adding that "to set up Lord Palmerston as the man to be Prime Minister is just about the most wretched error and miserable falling-down before cleverness (genius he has not) I can conceive." Within five years he was contentedly serving under this "self-seeking adventurer" in his second Administration. Lord Ripon was not to blame. In politics there are no irrevocable sensibilities. Lord Ripon, when young and steeped in enthusiasm, was surprised at his own conversion to the view that "poor old Palmerston" possessed virtues which he "failed to discern in Lord John Russell." Thirty years later he expressed no surprise when Lord Rosebery who, "as a Peer and an Imperialist, was anathema to the Radicals in the House of Commons," found himself embarrassed by the clamour of those same unbending critics who offered to serve under him when he was engaged in forming his Government. Ten years later Lord Ripon, now thoroughly disillusioned, could afford to look with amusement upon the "relatively easy task" of Sir Henry Campbell-

Bannerman, into whose Cabinet the Liberal Imperialists, with notable exceptions, rushed with indecent haste.

Lord Ripon's published and private letters show that high standard of loyalty to party leadership which he adopted early in life and maintained to the end. Mr. Gladstone's retirement, after his defeat in 1874, chimed with Lord Ripon's entry into communion with the Church of Rome. During the following years he felt that he had put an end to his chance of a return to office, but, smarting under Mr. Gladstone's attack upon the Church of his adoption, he determined not to accept an exclusion which might be interpreted to confirm the imputations cast by Mr. Gladstone upon the loyalty of Roman Catholics. He definitely attached himself to Hartington, who had been elected Leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons, and henceforward became one of the most eager attendants at the Party councils which met at Devonshire House. At this time I was much in his company. Alternately with Lord Granville, he entertained the Opposition party leaders in Carlton Gardens on the eve of the session, when Hartington read the Queen's Speech which was due to be delivered on the morrow.

During the fateful days in May 1880, when the choice of a Liberal Prime Minister was in doubt, Lord Ripon, although anxious for office, stood firmly by his chosen leader and watched his old

associates pass swiftly over to Mr. Gladstone. The events that followed the final retirement of Mr. Gladstone in 1894, when once more the loyalty of politicians was smartly tested, are less known. Lord Rosebery's temperament, so different from the cheerful resilience of Campbell-Bannerman, struck a tragic note in the kindly heart of Lord Ripon when he found his chief deserted by the men who had forced the Premiership upon him. In Lord Morley's recollection, Lord Rosebery was well aware of the difficulties that confronted him when he reluctantly accepted the task imposed upon him by Queen Victoria. If so, his forecast was a true one, for towards the end of the year his Cabinet was in such confusion that, according to a letter of Mr. Asquith's to Lord Ripon, written two years later, consultation between the Prime Minister and the Leader of the House of Commons had to be carried on by a third party, presumably Mr. Asquith himself. When Lord Rosebery's harassed Government fell, and the Liberal Party was crushed at the General Election that followed, the troubles over the leadership of the party were not ended. Amid recriminations and rivalries, Lord Ripon was the first to endeavour to bridge a gulf that was unbridgeable. When, after differences and provocations, including the unexpected but inevitable emergence of Mr. Gladstone from his retirement at a moment of unusual tension, Lord Rosebery resigned the leadership of the Liberal Party, and at a farewell meeting

held in Edinburgh was supposed to have nominated Mr. Asquith as his political heir, Lord Ripon never abandoned hope of his leader's return. "I found Rosebery full of life," he wrote to Lord Spencer, "and evidently beginning to work for a future leadership free from the Harcourt connection. I hope he will not try to push matters too quickly."

From 11th December 1896, when this letter was written, to 12th December, two years later, when Sir William Harcourt, writing to Lord Ripon from his home at Malwood, described the "situation as intolerable," and declared his resolve not to appear in the House of Commons again as leader, rumours and sectional intrigues were rife. What Gladstone had been to Hartington and to Rosebery himself, Rosebery was now to Harcourt. Sir William Harcourt certainly believed that a "plot for a Rosebery restoration was actually on foot"; but of these plots and intrigues there is, as yet, very meagre proof. When Campbell-Bannerman was unexpectedly chosen leader of the Liberal Party in the House of Commons Ripon was surprised; but his keen sense of discipline and Party loyalty led him to accept the Party choice and to abide by it. Throughout these difficult years, when Campbell-Bannerman was bitterly assailed, Ripon was always there to comfort and support. "State your policy plainly in your coming speech," he wrote from Studley in November 1900, "and then, when we meet before the session to consider

the line to be taken, say distinctly in the face of Asquith, Grey, Fowler, H. Gladstone and the rest, that, if you are not supported in that policy by the party as a whole, they will have to find another leader.' I am pretty confident that they will shrink from the necessity." Lord Ripon was not mistaken. They shrank.

In the summer and autumn of 1901 the "revolt of our *Lib. Imps.*—the *Chartered Company*, as I call them," Campbell-Bannerman wrote to Ripon, had failed; "the Asquith demonstration squib fizzed off the wrong way, and for the present all things go well." But, although Sir Henry could write lightly of the "intrigues," Ripon was full of indignation and, believing that a break was inevitable, he expressed a strong hope that "no patched-up arrangement" would be made. He need have had no apprehension. Although there were "rival tabernacles," the great majority of the Liberal Party were with Campbell-Bannerman and Ripon. Liberal Imperialism in its schismatic form counted only a few adherents. When it became evident that Mr. Balfour's administration was near its end, and that Campbell-Bannerman was the alternative Prime Minister, the rats began to hasten away from the foundering Liberal League. A final stand was made by Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Haldane.

Deserted by their friends they endeavoured to make terms. It was intimated to Sir Henry that if he would consent to sterilize his influence by

going to the House of Lords, leaving Mr. Asquith to lead the House of Commons, the last of the Liberal Leaguers would enter his Cabinet. Ripon advised strongly against this solution of a difficulty. Its gravity he questioned; and Sir Henry referred the matter to an arbitrament where decisions for him were final. The story is well known. Lady Campbell-Bannerman was an invalid, but her faculties and judgment were unimpaired. Standing before one of his faithful colleagues Sir Henry pointed with his finger to the ceiling of the room in which they stood and said, “*She* says no.” This settled the matter. The Sibyl had spoken. The Liberal Leaguers accepted the decision; the Government, under Sir Henry, was formed; and Lord Ripon, in his seventy-eighth year, consented to take the Privy Seal and the leadership of the House of Lords.

From 1900 onwards the two men were knit together by enduring friendship rare in political life. When there came a moment of great sorrow to Lord Ripon and he had passed his eightieth year, he told Campbell-Bannerman, then Prime Minister, that he was old and battered and good for nothing but the quiet that should precede the grave. But the Prime Minister—himself not far away from the final call—remembered the help and uncomplaining devotion he had always received from his colleague. “I most earnestly hope that you will remain among us, setting an example, keeping us to principles when we are tempted to stray, and by your wise and kindly

spirit winning the affectionate admiration of all around you."

It was not until another eighteen months had passed, after Mr. Asquith's succession to the Premiership, that this tough veteran, the last of the old guard, who had been in Palmerston's Cabinet with the grandfather of Sir Edward Grey, now his colleague, and had as another colleague "Loulou" Harcourt, who had often sat on his knee as a child, "finally doffed his harness, not on account of age or infirmities, but of a difference of opinion which might have happened at any time." It is a curious commentary upon the Liberal critics of Mr. Lloyd George's "autocracy" and his supposed suppression of Government by Cabinet, that the reason for Lord Ripon's resignation, his refusal to identify himself with the action of Mr. Asquith's Government in yielding to the inflammatory appeals of the Protestant Alliance, was for the first time made known to some members of Mr. Asquith's Cabinet by reading in Lord Ripon's biography his letter of resignation to the Prime Minister of the day. Chivalrous and loyal to the last Lord Ripon allowed Mr. Asquith to state or imply as the true cause of his retirement the false reason of advancing age and failing health, leaving him to suffer in silence the adverse comments of the Roman Catholic world rather than risk the danger to the Government—especially from their Irish supporters—if the true story had been revealed.

The sorrow that darkened the last two years

of Lord Ripon's life was the loss of his wife. After fifty years of companionship—and never was the word better exemplified than in the relation of these two married people—Lady Ripon died. She was his closest friend and counsellor. Every conclusion, slowly and laboriously formed, was brought to her whose advice he rarely set aside. In spite of sickness and pain, from which she was never altogether free, her smiling eyes and charming voice were ready always to be placed at his service. Her sofa was a throne of grace. I remember how on one occasion Auberon Herbert, her cousin, led his two beautiful curly-headed children, the late Lord Lucas and his sister, up to her sofa saying "We three are republicans, but you, dearest H.A.T., are our Queen."

"Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield," wrote Sir Arthur Helps from Hughenden, "agreed in one thing, their admiration for Lady Ripon." Her correspondence, if lacking in brilliancy, betrays in every line the sweetness of her character. From Rome in 1876 she wrote to me:

"I am supposed to be enjoying my travels wildly, and, if only I had a little less pain, I should do so, for I find to my surprise that age has not numbed my powers of appreciation of what to one appears beautiful, and I am as indifferent as ever to bad food, waiting at stations, travelling in the dark, and the hundred and one little things that put so many people out. . . . On Saturday Lord R. had an audience at the Vatican. The

Pope was very gracious and said that his conversion had cheered him up in his days of affliction. I have had a long talk with Ar<sup>t</sup>chbishop Howard. He used to be a partner in the days of my youth. He looks so contented and prosperous while he talks of the *present terrible state of things*, but, as he says, going to Heaven is all that signifies. One can understand his complacency without sharing his opinions. . . . I am very fond of Mrs. Arthur Sidgwick. I only saw Henry Sidgwick at his brother's wedding, but, if he is as good a philosopher as speaker, Cambridge has reason to be proud of him indeed. I did not think the stammering a real drawback, and otherwise he was perfect."

I could quote many extracts from Lady Ripon's letters to show her fine discrimination, although she had no pretensions to style, and wrote upon impulse out of simple friendship. Of the ex-Viceroy of India she wrote to me, "Lord Northbrook interests me. He is so warm-hearted, and that cold sarcastic manner is merely a mask. I should think he was always haunted by the fear of being carried away by sentiment." Of W. E. Forster she says, "He is an overgrown baby who never had his fling when young"; and of Lord Ripon she wrote to me:

"We went to Rome this time last year. I think Goderich becomes happier every day. A life of rule is so soothing and attractive to his disposition. I sometimes think that if I were to die, he would be *tempted* to join some community;

but he would not yield to the inclination, devoted as he is to the old *Duty to your neighbour* of the Catechism."

Perhaps with some persistence in this train of thought she had urged Lord Ripon to visit once more Dr. Newman, who was getting old and very frail. Lord Ripon spent two happy days at the Birmingham Oratory, the memory of which remained with him for the next thirty years of his life. To me he wrote:

"I was more than charmed with the *great man*, as you justly call him, but it was on this occasion, just as it was when I saw him before, his wonderful simplicity which struck me most—a gentle modest simplicity which is more saintly than anything I have ever seen, though Father Douglas in Rome has a good deal of it. We were, I think, both shy at first (of course I was); but, as time went on, it wore off and we talked about all sorts of things and people charmingly. You see his intellectual power flashing out through his modesty in a way unlike anything I have ever seen before, and sometimes the sparkle of an almost unconscious sarcasm, playful not malicious, but recalling many things in his writings. In all he said of others there was a wonderful gentleness and fairness, whether he spoke of Gladstone or Dr. Pusey or whosoever it might be. He seems much older in the face than in his movements, which are singularly swift (that seems to me the appropriate word), and show the naturally eager temperament of the man. This morning I

attended his Mass at seven and received Holy Communion from him."

At this time, and throughout the two succeeding years (1878-1879), the idea that he might again hold office was forming in Lord Ripon's mind. In all questions of domestic and foreign policy he took an active interest, and never lost a chance of urging his views upon the Liberal leaders. His mistrust and dislike of Palmerston in the days of early manhood were in middle life transferred to Lord Beaconsfield. His hatred of Disraeli was an unreasoning obsession, much as his hatred of Palmerston had been.

"I cannot doubt," he wrote to me (1878), "that Lord Beaconsfield has really unconstitutional theories and tendencies in the direction of the *Quarterly Review* article. I do not think that these theories have any hold on the country; and, when Lord B. is out of the way, he will have no successors in this part of his political teaching. But I fear the effect of it on the Queen and the Prince of Wales; Hartington and others may have to meet and overcome the evil consequences of these pernicious doctrines on Royal minds."

There was no reason for alarm. Such reflections and fears are the commonplaces of controversial politics. But Disraeli's mind, mystical, adventurous, and robust, could make no possible appeal to one who, however honest, as Mr. Gladstone said of Jane Austen, "neither dives nor soars." Lord Ripon mistrusted alike the

diver and the soarer. It was this mistrust that had led him from Frederick Maurice into the Roman fold. During the intervening years he had read much, and had faced the three questions that Kant said it was the business of philosophy to answer. To the enquiry, "What can I know? What ought I to do? For what can I hope?" he had found no reply other than the formulae of the Catholic Church. Probability was for him no guide of life. He required the certainty which he could only find in Rome.

Having accepted the doctrines of the Catholic Church, he judged all things by her standards. He had moved away from the Radicalism of his youth, and moved towards the Whiggism of his parents. So much a Whig had he become that he would quote with approval Lord Acton's dictum that the danger is not that a particular class is unfit to govern; every class is unfit to govern. Like all Whigs, he had ceased to feel active doubt. Morals, politics, the world, were full of problems, but all were soluble by the application of a few simple rules. The mind's health, as well as the body's, lay in routine—a rule of life. He refused to believe that his countrymen, with whom he had always been on such excellent terms, caring for their welfare and working for it, would acquiesce in the conclusions of Mr. Gladstone's pamphlets on the Vatican Decrees. To persecute him as a Catholic, and shut him out from the field in which he had worked all his life, could not happen, unless

Mr. Fox was right, and men persecute because they love persecution. And thus it came to pass, that he set his heart on entering the next Liberal Cabinet. His diary has been quoted, where he tells of the message sent him through Lord Hartington's private secretary. It was the post I then filled, and in my diary the following passage refers to the episode:

"A few days ago I showed Lord Ripon a list which, when I was at Chatsworth, Harcourt had made of candidates for office in the next Liberal Government. The following day Lady Ripon said Goderich was surprised at the omission of his name. I said I never supposed, nor did Harcourt, I felt sure, that Lord Ripon had office in view, having, when he became a Catholic, abandoned all idea of it. That evening, after dinner, he called me to his room, and said that he wished me to know that his views of eligibility for office, as a Catholic, were not what they were five years ago. His position in the country was stronger than it ever was before. . . . Lord Halifax, the only man with whom he had discussed the matter, was of opinion that he might be included in the Cabinet notwithstanding his religion. Whether it would be wise of a Prime Minister to give him office he was not prepared to say; that would depend on circumstances; but he wished me to know that he did not consider himself, and he did not wish it to be assumed that he did consider himself 'out of the running.' "

In the following spring (1880) he was Governor-General of India. He succeeded Lord Lytton, described by Lord Ripon's biographer as being "in his dreams and his pose more Disraelian than his hated chief." No one who ever knew Robert Lytton could connect him with "pose" of any kind. It was true that he saw visions and dreamed dreams, delightful compound as he was of statesman and poet, of cultured mind and youthful heart. He may have inspired hatred in political opponents who never understood or knew him. Of those who were fortunate enough to be honoured with his friendship, most men and all women loved him. His Indian administration, like that of Lord Ripon afterwards, was criticized, according to the angle and prejudices of the critic. The hostility to Lytton's frontier policy was part of the stock-in-trade of the Liberal Opposition of the time. Ripon's frontier policy, as he found himself forced to admit, was a continuation, not a reversal, of his predecessor's, although its sequence was adroitly concealed under the verbal repudiation common to all Party manœuvres.

When General Gordon resigned the private secretaryship to which Lord Ripon had appointed him, making (as he owned) a "bad selection," that resignation was the direct consequence of the glimpse of "self-seeking, jealousy, petty intrigue," and insincere political manœuvre, of which he got many a proof on the way out. This Gordon told to a young companion, my

brother, who was A.D.C. to the Viceroy at the time; and admitted it frankly to Lord Ripon before they parted. For many months after he returned home, Gordon spent days and days at the India Office doing what he could to "send out reinforcements to Baring," for to Evelyn Baring, afterwards Lord Cromer, who had proceeded to India as Financial Member of Council, Gordon looked as the one man who would "run straight," if only he could be adequately supported against what he called the backstairs interests. "Baring cannot stand with no one to support him," was the burden of his warning. In one of his letters to me, he says:

"Now I think it is very obvious why the Council may fear . . . (a certain reinforcement), for there is no doubt but that his presence, supporting Baring, would drive the other jingo lot out of the field. I do think that in justice to Baring he ought to have some one who you would know would assist him in his troubles."

And again :

"The Chinese Government have a system under which men who belong to the College of Censors go through the country and report on the deeds of the local authorities. These censors, have a right to address the throne which cannot be questioned. . . . They are a wonderful lot, and often die in defence of their rights. . . . Well, to-day I *censored* Lord Northbrook, and told him it was *mean* not to send out reinforcements to Baring, who was surrounded by bores;

that Baring was a man who, if he was not supported, would resign; that H.M.G. had put him there and ought to help him."

Reinforcements, as Gordon called them, were sent. But there was no ground for pessimism. Lord Cromer, as Baring afterwards became, could take care of himself. His virile handling of difficult situations will become clearer than ever should the letters written home by him during the many weeks when Lord Ripon lay at the point of death from an attack of typhoid fever, from which he was rescued by the skill and experience of his doctor, Jock Anderson, who remained Lord and Lady Ripon's lifelong friend and adviser, ever be published. During that time, when the Government of India was nominally in other hands, its real director was Evelyn Baring, who, though only recently arrived, by his coolness, intelligence, and stubborn character very soon found all the threads between his fingers. That later there were difficulties in the relations between Lord Ripon and his Finance Minister cannot be disputed; but, thanks to two generous minds that recognized the nature of each other's difficulties, they were adjusted. When the parting came, Lord Ripon admitted that the loss of Baring was serious, as "they had got to understand each other thoroughly"; and he knew he could "rely upon Baring absolutely in the hour of difficulty."

The most characteristic portrait of Lord Ripon was published in the form of a photograph in

the second volume of his biography. It was taken in the garden at Studley by Lewis, Lord Harcourt. He is seated dressed in the suit of homespun which, if renewed in the course of years—we none of us believed in its renewal—showed no distinctive badge differentiating it from its predecessors. The attitude, the curious platform, which was intended as a preservation from damp and could be pushed or carried easily from point to point—the whole picture, in fact, is to the life. Short of stature, commonplace in feature, Lord Ripon could carry himself with dignity and effect. His utterance was clear, his voice somewhat rough, but he spoke in private and in public with ease, often with pathos, and with a sincerity that replaced eloquence. An "optimist by temperament and conviction, it was from "Prosperity Robinson" that he inherited this persistent buoyancy. But his simple faith in a Divine Power that was specially engaged in safeguarding his decisions had also much to do with it. Whether as a Freemason, or later as a Catholic, he never doubted the validity of his orders. He had no need to wrestle, like his dour ancestor Cromwell, with troubling thoughts. Obedience came as easily to him as rebellion to more imaginative souls. Leadership, whether of the Pope or of Campbell-Bannerman, was one of the cardinal truths of life's battle. To follow worthily the preacher of a doctrine he believed to be true, or the chief of a political party which was his, seemed to him, as George Eliot, whom

he read admiringly, had explained, as ennobling as leadership itself.

The home life of Lord Ripon was centred in Studley Royal. For centuries the monks of Fountains influenced the lives of the country folk who inhabited that stretch of Yorkshire from the cathedral town of Ripon to the weird rocks of Brimham, and to the fringe of the moors at Dallowgill. In what degree that influence is still operative is one of the unexplored secrets of history. All that apparently remains are the lovely arches of the Abbey, standing desolate below the wooded slopes, from which, on winter days, high-flying pheasants were driven, immune except from the destructive skill of the son of the house. And what will remain in the coming years of the influence and charity, in its broad Greek sense, of Lord Ripon and his wife? What will remain of the memory of their son Oliver, the second Marquess, whose relation to his mother was so loverlike and intimate, and of his wife, Sidney Herbert's daughter, beautiful, brilliant, and beloved? To recall them all there is not even a ruined arch.

England is far behind France in the recorded story of her people's lives. When English muniment rooms are ransacked, the searchers are apt to select documents that bear upon events inaptly called public, and to place aside those that refer to more intimate things. In France an acuter sense of relative values obtains. The marvellous repository of autobiography and documents *pour*

*servir*, the Bibliothèque Nationale, is for ever giving evidence of its endless treasures. And going beyond what France possesses, Littré regretted that every family, however humble, had not preserved its archives and some record of its moral history. Unfortunately, politics and war have absorbed an undue share of attention in the written history of mankind. In a noble passage a writer of the nineteenth century speaks of the great river courses which have shaped the lives of men, as having hardly changed; while even those lesser streams, the life-currents that ebb and flow in human hearts, still pulsate to the same needs, the same loves and terrors. Even so; even if there is a broad sameness of the human lot, which never alters in the main headings of its history—hunger and labour, seed-time and harvest—there are often unrecorded variations of poignant interest to the artist, the poet, and the historian.

So far, it is to the novelist and not to the biographer that the wise reader looks for a picture of life as it really is. A truer appreciation of the function of biography would subordinate the recital of events to environment, would place, even before achievements, a man's hopes formed in youth, their realization or shattering in after years, and would record the everyday life of a man and a woman, amid those common things which, after all, are the only setting in which character is formed or blasted.

## VIII

### MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

TO the psychologist the story of King Edward, from his birth to the day when in late manhood he ascended the throne of England, is full of interest. The youth of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, his moral training, the prayers that were offered for him by parents who would nowadays be considered old-fashioned and foolish, the tears he cost them, the natural reactions of youth against artificial restraints, the gradual emergence of an independent personality from a circumscribed environment, all these things at one time so secret, are now revealed. The story is full of pathos and humour. The Prince's parents, Queen Victoria and her husband, took their parenthood so seriously. They had such faith in the efficacy of tending their rare plant in the early stages of its growth; they believed so firmly that with careful pruning they could train every shoot of a young mind. Blindly they struggled, as we all do, to achieve unreality. They would have made of him a prig, or at best a saint, and they fashioned a very human Prince, a man full of weakness and strength, better qualified, thanks to nature's deft way of looking after her products, to fill his great station, than

the stunted ideal of which they had dreamed. So cramped is the vision of noble and aspiring minds, so dexterously does a touch of nature assimilate the kinship of Prince and peasant.

A gifted lady who attended his christening has recorded her first impression of the baby Prince. His young parents, after offering a prayer on their knees for their child, passed, arrayed in the robes of the Garter, into St. George's Chapel, where, so the Prince's official governess noted in her Journal, "the floods of sunshine through the painted windows shone on the fierce stout features of the Royal baby." She noted that "the Prince of Wales is turning out passionate and determined enough for an autocrat. But he has still his lovely mildness of expression and calm temper in the intervals." At three years old he was "generous and good tempered, with a few passions and *stampings* occasionally."

Sixty years passed and Lord Fisher described his royal friend and master in very similar words. "It was a pleasure," Lord Fisher says, "to face his furious anger for the sake of the lovely smile you got later on."

His old governess, Lady Lyttelton, noted his exemplary politeness and manner as a child, and these characteristics he never lost. If the King assailed you, as he sometimes assailed me, vigorously, remorselessly, it was almost certain that within an hour or two he would send for you, or despatch a few lines on a slip of paper,

on some wholly different subject, in the friendliest manner, with no allusion to what had passed. It was the *amende honorable* of a gentleman and a Prince.

It is an easy matter to scoff at the idealism of Queen Victoria and her husband—and to smile at their enthusiastic faith in methods of training a young mind which no parents would venture to apply in these Byzantine days. Their children were shielded from every moral breeze, protected against every intellectual draught, alienated from the contact of other children, shut off from every chance of contamination. Queen Victoria herself once said to me in Kensington Palace—I was wheeling her bath chair through the room in which her accession had been announced to her as a girl of eighteen—that as a child she had never walked downstairs unless someone held her hand. She looked back humorously upon the unnecessary precautions taken by the Duchess of Kent. It was evident that the analogy never occurred to her between her mother's exaggerated anxiety and the precautions used to prevent the Prince of Wales during the whole of his boyhood from walking in a spring garden unattended. There was always some tutor, governor, or equerry to hold his hand. An interesting comparison could be drawn between the early education of this young Prince, under the Teutonic auspices of his father, who condemned "banter" and "practical jokes"—in favour of which the son reacted so strongly a few years later—and that

of the young Duc de Bourgogne, under Fénelon, or that of the Duc du Maine under the foundress of St. Cyr.

It cannot be said that the Prince's education left no permanent trace upon his character, save reaction under what seems to be a natural law in psychology as well as in biology. No one was more conscious of this than the King himself. One morning in Buckingham Palace he was looking, in a dreamy way that had become habitual, at some painting or sketch of himself in a brilliant poplin frock, and I heard him murmur, "How I hated that dress!" Throughout life, following his mother's early warnings, he detested sartorial display in man or woman. On another occasion, driving alone with him from a visit to Houghton—then unoccupied—where he had borrowed a sovereign from me to "tip" the caretaker, he said, "I was allowed no money as a boy, and got out of the habit of carrying any," and then added sadly, "but I had no boyhood."

He used to say that he hated the memory of White Lodge, where he had been bored to death in his youth, surrounded by middle-aged men, cut off from young companionship, and he was determined that his sons, whether at Cambridge, in the Navy or the Army, should not be "coddled" and should as early as possible experience the rough as well as the smooth of life.

If very few distinctive features of his character

threw back to early progenitors, if *bonhomie*, *joie de vivre*, and sympathy with the French outlook on life became the principal traits of his manly nature, the causes surely lay in the rebellion of a singularly independent mind against the restraints imposed upon his youth, against the shy and ungenial manner of his father; reactions foreseen by a man of the world like Lord Melbourne, whose "common sense lay beyond the range of Prince Albert or of Stockmar." If he "broke away" at Oxford, and took to surreptitious smoking of cigars with "Harry" Chaplin and "Freddy" Johnstone, the first friends of his own selection, it was a mild kick over the traces, only to have been expected with an official "Governor" at his elbow, who threatened to report him to the Prince Consort on every occasion of a boyish lapse. If, later on, when first quartered with the 10th Hussars, he gave proof that the springs of life were overflowing the channels so assiduously embanked by parental care, it was largely due to that accentuated zeal which had, much to the sardonic amusement of Cavour, forbidden the young man to visit the ebullient Victor Emmanuel at Turin, and confined his activities to an interview, in the presence of his ambulatory Governor, with Pius IX.

When his father died the Prince of Wales was twenty years old. Except the nine years during which he occupied the Throne, those which elapsed between his marriage and the death of Lord Beaconsfield in 1881 were the most fruitful

and the happiest. ' He was still young, and fired by the " wish to be of use," although in the full tide of married happiness and of the social round that he loved. Writers have skimmed the surface of the Prince's domestic life—perhaps because of the inherent difficulty of such a theme—but reticence is often fatal to biography for it reduces the stature of a subject. I remember the " Life " of a statesman I knew well, expounded with much ability, in the usual two volumes, from which was omitted all reference to the dominating influence which made of that man a politician and a statesman. The Prince of Wales would have been the first to acknowledge the debt he owed to the popular charm, the grace and beauty, and the unwavering fidelity of the " Sea King's Daughter " who linked her life with his. Very few still remember Queen Alexandra's arrival in the home where she lived so long. A Roman basilica of red sandstone, built during the first half of the eleventh century, stands in the Rhenish city of Spires, the ancient capital of the old Bavarian Palatinate. A legend runs that one morning in September 1861, under the vaulted nave of the cathedral, a girl not quite seventeen years old was first seen by the Prince of Wales, himself only twenty, whose wife a year and a half later she was to become. When these two young people came to be married, Queen Victoria in a message to the nation, drafted in her own hand, described the marriage of her eldest son as. " based entirely upon mutual

affection "and the personal merits of the Princess." Lord Palmerston, who was the Queen's Prime Minister, used homelier language, and told the House of Commons that the marriage "in the fullest sense of the word might be called a love match."

It was in this sense that all the English-speaking people greeted the bride. When the crowded masses who gathered to see Princess Alexandra of Denmark, as she drove through the streets of London on 7th March 1863, realized the beauty and grace of that "Sea-king's daughter as happy as fair"—for so Tennyson called her—they saw in a moment that Lord Palmerston's phrase was no formal compliment. The marriage turned out to be a love match, not even in the limited sense that the Prime Minister had in his mind, between a boy and a girl, but a love match in the fullest sense between a Sea-king's daughter and an Island people who admired and loved her for over sixty years.

Tennyson's welcome was aptly turned. For centuries the Princess's ancestors had reigned over Sweden and Norway as well as over Denmark. When the Napoleonic wars ended and the Congress of Vienna altered the map of Europe, the dynasty of Oldenburg was restricted to the kingdom of Denmark. In the very year that the young Princess left her Danish home, King Frederick VII died childless, and the crown devolved upon a younger line of his ancient house, which since 1544 had been called

the House of Glucksborg. Prince Christian, who succeeded to the Crown of Denmark under the title of Christian IX, was the father of Queen Alexandra.

According to the Royal fashion of those days, the Prince Consort, with the help of King Leopold of Belgium, had drawn up a list of possible Princesses from among whom a suitable bride might be selected by the Prince of Wales for himself. Among these seven or eight names that of Princess Alexandra stood about half-way down, but the young Prince, whose good taste and good luck had already begun to characterize every important event of his life, seems to have had no doubts, and although his father believed a Belgian Princess to have some chances of securing the great matrimonial prize, it became clear from the moment that the Prince of Wales caught that glimpse of the young girl under the cathedral arches—like some Beatrice or Gretchen—that he never wavered. His choice was made.

On a day in March, when the young Princess passed through London and on to Windsor, the English Court, and England itself, were very different from the home she had just quitted and from the England of to-day. The Danish Royal Family were youthful and gay. Theirs was a singularly happy, cheerful home. Here Queen Victoria had only just completed her first year of widowhood. Windsor Castle was wrapped in gloom. Since the easy-going days of the Stuarts, the etiquette of the English Court had

stiffened, and this child Princess soon discerned that, under novel and difficult conditions, heavy social duties were about to devolve upon her, which the bereaved Queen felt she herself was utterly unable to discharge. The society of which the Princess of Wales found herself the head had also its own rigid rules: customs that contrasted sharply with the simplicity and freedom of the people she had left behind. Fortunately she was provided with a house in London which she liked at first sight, and a home in the country to which she became deeply attached. Owing to the careful administration of the Duchy of Cornwall estates by the Prince's father during a long minority, and owing to the recognition by the House of Commons of the social burdens thrown upon the Heir to the Throne, the Prince entered into possession of a large income. Marlborough House had been allotted to his use, while Sandringham, which had been purchased out of the savings of the Duchy, was on the way to become that country home which he and the Princess always loved.

The Princess stepped at once into the leadership of what in those far-away days was called High Society. She was very young and very attractive, and all men and most women were at her feet. It was from this time that Marlborough House took and retained for forty years the place of Buckingham Palace, where the blinds remained closely drawn. Henrietta Marchioness of Ripon—she was then called

Countess de Grey—was one of the first Ladies-in-Waiting selected for the young Princess. She used to say in after years that no one could imagine anything more lovely than her young charge or resist the Princess's love of frolic and fun. The household of the Prince and Princess had been most carefully chosen. Its members, most of them, have long since passed away, but there are still a few left. Lord Halifax, still constant to his youth's ideals, who, then called Charles Wood, had been so wisely selected by the Prince Consort to be one of the earliest companions of his eldest son, and Lord Lincolnshire, who must many times have commanded an escort, riding by the Princess's side during some official progress, when she was representing Queen Victoria : while perhaps a certain Thomas Hardy may have seen her pass through Wessex Lanes to some Wessex country house that his grateful readers have no difficulty in recognizing. Of course there are many of us who remember a little later in Queen Alexandra's romantic story her graceful rendering of the part she was called upon to play. But even in later years the stage was very differently set from the stage of to-day. In Victorian times, upon which so much cynical ink has been shed, social life was much more private, and it was very distinguished. "Society," of which the Prince and Princess of Wales were the leading figures, met and dined and danced in its own select homes. The restaurant life of the Metropolis had not entered upon even its

primitive stages. There were no restaurants, for not even Verrey's—one of the earliest—had commenced to lead the way to that orgy of public feeding and dancing which has since become the fashion. The ambition of a young debutante in those unsophisticated times was to be received by the hostess of one of the palaces that clustered round Marlborough House. Not one of these remains. Stafford House, where three Duchesses of Sutherland had entertained their friends; Devonshire House, full of memories; Grosvenor House, not less brilliant than a modern dancing saloon; Montagu House; Dorchester House, all have already disappeared or are disappearing as landmarks of Society. Season after season at uncrowded dances, at concerts where Mario, autumnal but still delightful, Patti, Neilson, Melba, and Jean de Reske gave of their best amid historic surroundings, the Prince and Princess were the leaders of a society that had not begun to reflect the crudities of New York. No one who was present would ever be likely to forget the balls at Grosvenor House in those long ago days when Constance Duchess of Westminster lured her Royal guests to remain until the June sun paled the myriad lights in the garden beyond the ball-room. Or again, at Stafford House a Veronese pageant, with the overhanging gallery crowded with rows of beautiful faces as the Princess of Wales, with that curiously graceful glide that by strong volition she had imposed upon an accidental lameness, mounted the great

staircase accompanied and rivalled but not eclipsed by her hostess. 'Some of us remember how once, at Lady Suffield's, when the eldest daughter of the house, now Lady Lincolnshire, reigned supreme among girls, charming groups of young people sang and danced to Farmer's setting of Nursery Rhymes Quadrilles, . and how the Princess of Wales joined in the riotous, innocent fun of a cotillon, in one figure of which she allowed herself to be rubbed out from the tell-tale mirror, enjoying the delightful impertinence more than anyone else. A longer memory can recall one summer evening at Strawberry Hill, where the Princess and Mrs. Standish, dominoed alike, led baffled dancers into endless confusion of a merry kind, with Lady Waldegrave sitting, like some over brilliant autumn rose, on a triangular Gothic throne, a prey to the teasing solicitude of her masked and Royal guests.

But among all these bright scenes Marlborough House stood first; on hot nights, when the great striped tent was spread away from the ball-room, when young couples, now passed into dreamland, sat up the stairway under Sarah Marlborough's commemorative frescoes, while their Royal host and hostess moved among what Disraeli, in his account of their wedding at St. George's Chapel, called the "gathering of the great world, the centre of a constellation of beauty, the Prince and Princess, looking like a young couple in a fairy tale." It was after the first party given at St. James's Palace by this same young couple

when they returned to London after their honeymoon that Disraeli recorded his impressions. "Her face," he wrote, "was delicate and refined, her features regular, her brow well moulded, her mouth beautiful, her hair good, and her ears small. She was very thin. She had the accomplishment of being gracious without smiling. She had repose. She spoke English, but not with the fluency I expected. The Prince hovered about her." This description is followed by a very Disraelian passage about the food of nightingales, which the Prince of Wales laughingly discredited. But he was told that the assertion was quite a fact that "we have a great many nightingales at Hughenden," to which the Prince retorted, "We have one nightingale at Sandringham." A few days later Lord Beaconsfield's lifelong antagonist was writing very similar praise. "The charm," Mr. Gladstone wrote, "certainly does not wear off with renewed opportunity. Clarendon, who saw her for the first time, *fully* felt it."

But there is testimony from one who was, perhaps, a better judge than these two already elder statesmen. Louisa Lady Waterford, sister of Lady Canning, whose appreciative gifts and refined sensibility are beyond question, has left a record of her first impressions of the youthful pair. Writing on 25th March 1863, she reports: "At the Friday reception I saw the graceful, charming young Princess of Wales, and she in no way disappointed me. There was something

charming in that very young pair walking up the room together. Her graceful bows and carriage you will delight in, and she has, with lovely youth and well-formed features, a look of great intelligence beyond that of a mere pretty girl. She wore a coronet of diamonds, which I saw drawn in the *Illustrated News*, and a very long-trained gown of cloth of silver trimmed with lace, pearl and diamond necklace, bracelets, and a stomacher, and two lovelocks of rich brown hair floated on her shoulders."

Seventeen years later, one August day, Lord Charles Beresford landed the Prince and Princess, their two boys and three girls, from the Royal yacht on the beach at Highcliffe. It was a surprise visit to Lady Waterford. She found "very little change in the wonderfully youthful Princess, " looking so charming in a dark jersey trimmed with red." The boys swam about in their flannels, and finally the Prince of Wales and his sons made an unconventional exit by swimming out to what Lady Waterford called "their steam tug." Queen Alexandra must have enjoyed Lord Charles and his surprise visits, for among the qualities that appealed most to all who were privileged to approach her was that sense of fun which went so far to endear her to the people of this country. It is characteristic of our race that the surest link between high and low, rich and poor, in this strange Imperial democracy, is a common appreciation of humorous incident. One of the first attributes

that the countless thousands who at one time or another gathered about the Prince and Princess noticed and loved was the quickness with which they seized upon some harmless ridiculous jest, and shared it with all who happened to be in their vicinity. Instinctively people feel that 'a King and Queen who can share a joke with them on equal terms are manifesting a gift of sympathy which is not limited to the sorrows of others, for that is a simple matter, but is extended to their humble joys and love of life. When Tennyson first met the Princess—it must have been about 1878—she asked him to read to her the poem he had written fifteen years before, when, as Poet Laureate, he had welcomed her to England. The reading finished, the fact of his reading his own complimentary poem to the Princess herself somehow struck them both as being so ludicrous that he dropped the book on the floor, and both went into fits of uncontrollable laughter.

There is another trifling story that Lord Beaconsfield told Lady Bradford. He was dining with the Hertfords, and he sat next the Princess. "I said something about her Orders, all of which she wore. She said it was a shame I had 'no decoration,' and she gave me her menu, which was a pretty one, to wear instead. I said, 'Your Royal Highness will not be able to select your dinner.' She replied, 'We will exchange menus, and I will wear yours as an additional Order.'" A trivial story—as St. Simon used to

say—but Lord ‘Beaconsfield thought it better worth repeating than ponderous talk on serious subjects, through which he invariably sat in grim, resentful silence.

There is one record of the impression created by the young couple that it would be a pity to forget. At Sandringham in 1863, only a few weeks after her wedding, Dean Stanley met the Princess. The Prince of Wales—he was only twenty-two—had written a note to the Dean asking him to spend Easter at Sandringham, adding that it would be specially agreeable to him, as on the previous Easter Sunday they had “together taken the Holy Sacrament at the Lake of Tiberias.” On the evening of Easter Eve the Dean wrote:

“The Princess [she was only nineteen] came to me in a corner of the drawing-room with her Prayer Book, and I went through the Communion Service with her, explaining the peculiarities and the likenesses and differences to and from the Danish Service. She was most simple and fascinating.” And later on he adds: “I gave the first English Sacrament to this Angel in the Palace. I saw a good deal of her, and can truly say that she is as charming and beautiful a creature as ever passed through a fairy tale.”

Marlborough House was the pivot of that social circle over which the Prince and Princess presided for forty years. The Prince delighted in the companionship of women who combined

intelligence and beauty. He was equally popular with both sexes, and his influence permeated through both beyond the social group which he habitually dominated. Much of the information accumulated by him came through a coterie of women at the head of which for many years stood Louise Duchess of Manchester, one of the cleverest and certainly one of the best informed women of her epoch.

There was *médisance* of course: whisperings were inevitable; as they always are, if a man is a man and possesses charm above the average. But there was no serious scandal. The Prince loved amusement with reckless passion. Practical jokes, condemned by his father, he enjoyed; scabrous stories that could only be told after dinner, by a Scottish ecclesiastic or a high municipal dignitary, amused and roused him. He liked fun, from which he had been excluded as a lad. His camaraderie was equally delightful to men and women, and his caprices never implied the neglect of old friends. Above all, the Princess of Wales never experienced a shade of indignity. Men who had bored him in youth were permitted to bore him as he grew older, without a suspicion of their maladroitness. His unforgetful kindness was well illustrated by many graceful acts. His old French tutor, Brasseur, lived in Paris, and to the end the Prince, when visiting the French capital, never failed to call upon him. The birthday of a lady once famous for her gallantries, since grown old and paralysed, was

remembered annually to the last day of his life by a gift of flowers.

If the dominant position held by the Prince in the social life of our country from the day of his marriage is well known, the part that he almost immediately began to take in public affairs has only lately been realized. In spite of the Queen's reluctance, founded on the precepts of her husband and uncle; of her doubts, based on a misreading of the character of her son, the Prince began as a youth of twenty-two to take an active share in the discussions of Foreign Affairs with successive Prime Ministers and with the representatives of Foreign Powers. Queen Victoria's attitude towards the Prince and her tenacious hold upon the functions of constitutional sovereignty have been disclosed. She resisted the constant pressure exercised by her Ministers to obtain privileges for the Prince which her aloofness from public life seemed to demand, and which she persistently declined to accord. The Queen's motives, like all human motives, lie too deep for analysis. She had no intention of sharing the burden of Empire with her son, and in fact never did so. It is true that the monarchical principle made it inevitable that, in view of her retirement, the Prince should take his mother's place in the social life of the people, but the Queen saw, and rightly, a distinction between the political and social functions of the Monarchy. She consistently adhered to her point, and it is impossible to doubt that she was right.

A great deal of nonsense was talked about the exclusion of the Prince from public affairs. Without abdicating her place in the Constitution, the Queen could not have safely admitted her son, after the fashion of the Roman Emperors, to share her Throne. What really happened was that although the Prince was debarred from receiving official documents as a matter of right, although he was not given the privilege of possessing a key of Cabinet boxes, nevertheless no one from the day of his marriage was better and more completely informed of the trend of public affairs than the Prince of Wales. The actions of Ministers, of Ambassadors, of public men on both sides in politics, neutralized the prohibition against the "right" to receive official information. The Prince not only heard the Government case, but he was taken into confidence by the leaders of the Opposition as well. He was speedily the best-informed man in the kingdom, and before he was twenty-five years old, the French Ambassador had testified to his influence upon public affairs, and Bismarck had begun to take notice of his opinions.

If the love of pleasure did fill a large space in his life, in reality the commanding features of the picture are the exceptional range and endurance of the Prince's activities, and his alert interest in public affairs.

The prolonged battle over Cabinet keys and Cabinet papers was largely a matter of *amour propre*. It raged for thirty years, and the concession was only made some seven or eight

years before the Queen died. It lacked reality, as from 1864 the Prince knew everything that was going on, and very often more than the Queen herself. Allowance should always be made for the difficulty of adjusting the points of view of a Sovereign and an Heir Apparent. Shakespeare has made Henry IV express a preference for Hotspur over Prince Hal as his potential heir. What an error of judgment! And how often has the mistake been repeated! Queen Victoria frequently complained that the Prince was garrulous and unsteady of purpose. In point of fact he was neither. He could be reserved when necessary; his moods were variable and sensitive to circumstances. To what statesman, however eminent, whether it be Richelieu, Mr. Pitt, or Lord Beaconsfield, would not the remark apply? The position of the Heir Apparent to a Throne is the most stringent test of a man's quality that we know of, and few Princes have passed it with honours. Flattery and criticism vie with each other to obtain the mastery of their unfortunate victim. It is difficult for a Prince of Wales to be captain of his soul. Our history is full of failures. Only a few of our Royal Princes have achieved success. King Edward was not what Mr. Rudyard Kipling calls a "plaster saint." But he was a gallant Prince and a remarkably efficient Sovereign. The English people gauged his character and his weaknesses with that generous tolerance which he was the first to acknowledge.

At the age of twenty-two he showed such independence of spirit that he braved the Queen's wrath by welcoming Garibaldi to London. His letters, at this early age, to Lord Spencer and to Mrs. Bruce, illustrate the growth of his adaptive mind, and bear witness to the value of the severe training he had undergone. Between the ages of twenty-five and twenty-eight he wrote upon all sorts of subjects to Ministers with all the assurance of prime manhood. Before he was thirty he was in the habit of requesting interviews from Ministers, and begging for explanations of their policy. His intercourse with foreign Ambassadors was no less intimate. When twenty-four years old, in an outspoken talk with the French Ambassador, he had already suggested an Entente with France as the only means of restraining Bismarck and preserving the Peace of Europe. This was anticipating by many years that day when Gambetta said of him, "He loves France gaily and seriously, and his dream is an Entente with us." All these activities were within the scope of what the Prince could legitimately accomplish, with due regard to his position. There were silly plans, to which he lent an ear, of attaching him to public offices in succession, so that he should serve apprenticeship in various departments of State, with a view to educating him in the sphere of government. Another empirical design by distraught ministers was to quiet Irish discontent by settling him on an Irish estate. These illuminating nostrums

were wisely snuffed out by the common sense of Queen Victoria, who, if unreasonable in some things, was far more reasonable than her official advisers in others.

That the Prince was never a reader of books is true. Men of sanguine temperament are seldom readers. He was occupied with the study of mankind. There were moments, travelling or residing abroad; when he read much and rapidly. He once sent me a sheaf of envelopes, on which he had scribbled shrewd criticisms—every reference page was numbered and marked—of some journals I had privately printed and of which he had a copy. His letters to anyone he trusted, when he was interested in a subject, were frequent and copious. His sense of decorum, his love of order, were controlled by his open-mindedness. “Times change, and precedents also,” he wrote when young to Lord Granville. In later life I often heard him retort when someone tried to restrain him on the ground that precedents were lacking, “Then I will create one.”

His political instinct was very sure. As early as 1867 he wrote from Paris, “Future troubles are brewing between France and Prussia.” At an early stage of the career of his nephew William II, he had gauged the want of balance in that dangerously unbalanced mind.

The Prince’s preference for objective rather than for subjective teaching was noted by his old tutor in boyhood. It remained a characteristic of his manhood. He was an excellent and shrewd

judge of men and women; although his unbored nature and real love of humanity led him sometimes almost to prefer the society of a bore like Sir Charles Dilke, who has been grotesquely called his "political tutor," to the incisive charm of a man like Mr. Chamberlain. On the other hand, he was an easy prey to the wit and *élan* of General Gallifet. By the time he was thirty he was acquainted with every personage of note in the two hemispheres; and Mr. Disraeli was already saying of him, "He is one who has seen everything and knows everybody." As an after-dinner speaker he soon gave evidence of his quality. Lord Houghton—no mean judge—placed him only second to himself, although, as undisputed matter of fact, Lord Granville was superior to both.

By politicians the Prince was universally liked and respected. Mr. Gladstone, who played in the Prince's career a more intimate part than that filled by Lord Beaconsfield, reciprocated the affectionate regard felt for him by the Prince.

There are a few men still among us who were selected companions of his boyhood. There are many who knew him in the full tide of his impetuous youth. To my thinking he was at the height of his princely powers between his thirty-fifth and fortieth years. How often is this the case! To very few, and possibly only to reflective minds, like Sophocles or Leonardo, is the privilege granted of sustained vigour after the age of forty. To men of action—and the Prince was

essentially a man of action—hardly ever. There are numberless examples, of which Napoleon, perhaps the foremost man of action the world has ever seen, is the most notable. At Schönbrunn in 1809, I think it was, Napoleon spent his fortieth birthday. He was at the zenith of his career. You have only to contrast the Moscow decrees with the orders of Austerlitz and Jena to grasp the physical and mental decline. In Chat-ham and his son the vital spark paled early. Louis XIV in the first thirty years of his reign raised France to the highest pinnacle of fame. During the latter half of his rule he ruined her people by his obstinacy and degraded her by his superstitions. In our time, there are manifold examples of the failure of statesmen to maintain, after the age of forty, a pertinent grasp over public affairs and the faculty of wise decision.

As the Prince grew older he was slower to grasp the trend of popular sentiment in England and abroad, it was because he was subject, as others are, to this inconvenient restriction. If he made more mistakes in judgment than his mother, it was because advancing years swayed him more than they swayed her, influenced as he was in a greater degree by the varying breezes of political sentiment.

Upon those who remember the Prince's activities, and the society in which he moved, the conclusion was long since forced that the Prince's powers relaxed between 1880 and 1897. Those seventeen years were clouded by a failure to

maintain the high average of the previous two decades. Then suddenly there dawned for him a St. Martin's summer. It appeared to date from the day when he led into the saddling enclosure at Epsom his first Derby winner. The outburst of popular goodwill on that occasion seemed to transfuse into his blood a new resolve. Of all field pursuits a love of the Turf sustains a man's optimism and endows him with the perpetual hopefulness of youth. In years the Prince was long past middle life. But age fell away from him. He lost a weary look that his friends had begun to note with anxiety. The aura of coming Kingship flickered about him. He began with renewed hope to "wish to be of use."

Throughout the greater portion of his life, from 1863 to 1901, Marlborough House had been his London home. He was now about to leave it, but the first months of his reign were spent within the familiar walls where his youth had run itself out, and where he performed the first functions of a Sovereign.

It happened that owing to an office that I held at the time, I was privileged to watch at close range the transformation of a Prince into a King.

Only a few months back I had been summoned to Osborne by Queen Victoria, and my duties had taken me often to Windsor, so that the strange quiet, the cloistral rule associated with the Queen's presence in a palace seemed an essential part of the regal state. Suddenly all

this was changed. For years, so it appeared to me, the windows of the Castle had been shaded against the outer light. Mysterious silence, whispered talk in the long corridors, light footfalls and softly closing doors, a sense of furtively escaping men and women at some awe-inspiring, unheralded approach, were an integral part of the royal influence that for sixty years had been cultivated with such care by the wonderful little woman whose name carried a deep meaning to the farthest ends of the earth, and was to stamp an era in this country's history. So potent was the remembrance of these small details of everyday life in the vicinity of the Monarch that it was difficult at first to realize that Kingship may assume different forms without losing its hold upon men's inconstant minds.

The scene at Marlborough House during the first weeks of King Edward's reign was in sharp contrast to everything to which we were accustomed. He himself was accessible, friendly, almost familiar, frank, suggestive, receptive, discarding ceremony, with no loss of dignity, decisive but neither obstinate nor imperious. Although he had not abandoned the room on the first floor, which he had always occupied, he transacted all business in one of the rooms on the ground floor looking into the garden. He permitted those who had access to him to smoke in his presence. He stood with his back to the fireplace, while one or two of us sat at tables arranged for our use. He passed from

one to the other, going minutely into every question as it arose, and giving decisions in short and concise sentences. You were told to enter the room unannounced, and if you desired to do so you left the room with a bow to the King, and returned when you wished. He was still questioning, dictating, deciding. His memory never seemed to betray him. The slightest slip in the instructions he had given was detected at once. The impression he gave me was that of a man who, after long years of pent-up action, had suddenly been freed from restraint and revelled in his liberty. I am sure that he was unconscious of the fact, and would have repudiated the idea with violence, but that the instinct was there—subconsciously, as modern slang would have it—I have never doubted. A change of mind, or new instruction, was often made by the King in pencil in his own difficult handwriting, on a half sheet of notepaper—which throughout his life he was fond of keeping under a paper weight on his table—and despatched by an orderly to its destination. There are very many in my possession showing his curious power of visualizing a pageant or comprehending a human weakness.

At Marlborough House, in the very first hours of his reign, he gave evidence of promptness, imagination, and invention—the primary gifts without which improvisation is hopeless, and showed by the plans for Queen Victoria's funeral, a noble and moving piece of pageantry, and by

the speech he made without a note or a word of suggestion to the First Council held at St. James's Palace after his Accession, that he was master of the arts of compelling emotion and of enlisting human sympathy.

No rhetorician or artist could have met with greater success. Owing to the necessity of making Buckingham Palace habitable, for it was a house almost mediaeval in its inaptitude to conform to modern standards of comfort, the new King and Queen remained for many months in what Queen Alexandra never ceased to call "My beautiful house." She made the move from her old home with reluctance, but King Edward had no reason to regret the change. The doors of Marlborough House were closed for a space of time. When they were re-opened, it was to receive a singularly happy household. But it did not become, and never became again, the dominant factor in the social life of London, nor has it occupied since the place it held during those thirty years when the Royal Standard was rarely seen to float over Buckingham Palace.

## IX

### BASELESS FABRIC

A PERSISTENT delusion of literary and artistic coteries is their conviction that they are the heralds of a Renaissance. Whether they call themselves Symbolists, Apostles, or Parnassians, they are overcome with pity, and sometimes with scorn, for the dark ages behind them.

In the literary ferment of to-day, as of every yesterday, brilliant writers are to be found whose constructive aim is to contrast the ineptitudes of their immediate predecessors with their own penetration. In this process, what is parochially called the Victorian Age—an expansive term that appears to embrace the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century in Europe and possibly beyond—suffers as severely as did the period of the Commonwealth at the hands of Charles II's rollicking courtiers.

Perhaps there is nothing very rollicking about the neo-Georgians—not even such literary stars as Mr. Lytton Strachey or Mr. Harold Nicolson—but it is difficult to withhold credit from these clever writers for having contributed to the sum of literary enjoyment. Mr. Strachey is a deft manipulator of phrases, and his wit sharpens itself pointedly on the foibles of his forbears in a

manner exceedingly delightful to the jaded readers of contemporary fiction. Mr. Harold Nicolson's pen is of graver quality, but he too writes well, and with a freshness that contrasts pleasantly with the gloomy pictures he loves to paint of the dowdy mental atmosphere of what, elliptically, he calls the 'seventies and 'nineties.

To use a Victorian platitude, people rarely see themselves as others see them; and I, who remember something of those days, am sadly disillusioned when I find myself confronted with the description these writers give of the dingy lives we led, the silly enthusiasms we cherished, our moral timidities, and the veiled hypocrisy with which we approached those three mighty mysteries—democracy, religion, and sex. It is Mr. Harold Nicolson who tells his contemporaries that:

"There were three truths, three quite unpleasant truths, from which even the Victorians failed to escape with their usual dexterity. There was democracy; there was the growth of unbelief; and there was sex. None of these three problems could be permanently dismissed as non-existent: they were problems which, however unpleasant they might be, it was essential in the end to face. And as the Victorians were singularly averse from facing anything, they approached these three problems obliquely and from the gentler angle of compromise."

It is all very sad. Of course, generalizations though one hardly dares to say so, are sometimes over-generalized, and may even be mis-

leading. For instance, "Victorians" may be too comprehensive a term by which to designate Gladstone and Huxley, Tennyson and Swinburne, Alfred Stevens and Frith, W. K. Clifford and Newman, Carlyle and Thackeray, Disraeli and Spurgeon, Darwin and Palmerston, if by this comprehensive designation we are to assume some characteristic common to them all. And we must assume this, because otherwise the term "Victorian," apart from chronology, would have no meaning at all. The contention of our critics is that any Victorian was an obvious product of an epoch characterized by exuberant idealism, wilfully blind to the cruder facts of life, so that we are entitled to infer that they have discovered some denominator common to all these powerful minds, apparently so dissimilar. I wonder what it is. Epochism, if there is such a word, is so convenient a method of approaching historical problems. It is like sticking a label. You plaster it on and there you are. By "Victorians" I assume are meant people who lived not only in England but elsewhere in Europe from 1837 to 1900. I say I assume in Europe, because Lincoln and his merry jests, and those wonderful Japanese magicians who, at the waving of a wand, transformed a mediaeval into a modern people, are never referred to by these writers on the Victorian era, whereas Mr. Harold Nicolson especially refers to Verlaine as a "mid-Victorian boy"; so it is fair to conclude that American and Japanese are not, but Europeans are, included in the cate-

gory, and that the "oblique" Cavour, the sexless Isabella of Spain, the timid democrat Gambetta, should be labelled "Victorians," ticketed not red, blue, nor yellow, but of some dull composite colour, appropriate to the dreariness of their common outlook upon life and to the artificial epoch in which their lives were lived. Of course, the reply may be made that the Victorian Age should not be judged by eminent Victorians, British or European, but by the average men and women to whose fears and prejudices a politician like Gladstone, a churchman like Archbishop Tait, a philosopher like Henry Sidgwick, a poet like Tennyson, sacrificed their convictions. If such weak-kneed worshippers as these bowed themselves down at the shrine of something defined as "Victorianism," and stultified themselves for the sake of an idealism they did not share, the reasons are explained by their critics, although some explanation is badly wanted other than the piece of absurd chronologism that Queen Victoria was seated upon the throne.

The allegation is that during the last three-quarters of the nineteenth century the three problems of democracy, religion, and sex were never faced by the leaders of public opinion or by their followers, but were approached "obliquely," and from the "gentler angle of compromise." It is curious that this remarkable change should be traceable to the accession of a young woman to an island throne, when we remember that during the forty previous years

Diderot, Napoleon, Goethe, Edmund Burke, David Hume, and countless others, wrestled with these problems, and that during the subsequent twenty-four years brilliant protagonists of moral courage and intellectual indifference, who shall be nameless, have experienced no difficulty in approaching these same problems without any obliquity, and from an angle to which the word "gentle" has no application.

So far as I am concerned, from what I have read, from what I have heard, and from what I remember, the conclusions drawn by these writers appear about as far removed from the truth as they well could be.

The term "highbrow" is apparently of American origin, although the attitude of mind, with its self-satisfied and pompous *hubris*, is as old as Aristophanes and as modern as Molière. The views I have described are those which characterize the "highbrow," and are reflected in their daily conversation from the literary effusions of their high priests.

Although it is rare to find a "neo-Georgian" who makes any attempt to define his terminology, I suppose we must assume "democracy" to mean the transfer of Government from the few to the many, "religion" to mean a conflict between Christian dogma and unbelief, and "sex" to comprehend the relation between men and women untrammelled by a contract of marriage. These appear to be the realistic interpretations of phrases dubious in the sense that they are

used by these writers in different ways. Taking them in order, let us see how the accusation that the Victorians shirked the issues involved under these three branches of sociology corresponds with the facts. Nine years after the Victorian era commenced the urban middle classes, led by Cobden and Bright, finally wrested from the country aristocracy the last vestiges of political power. The abolition of the Corn Laws destroyed once for all in England the political authority of an oligarchy that had ruled the country since the Revolution of 1688. Sir Robert Peel, followed by an influential section of the Tory Party, threw up the sponge. Two years later Democracy successfully wrested citadel after citadel from its opponents. Thenceforth, slowly but very surely, under Gladstone and under Disraeli, who, though apparently so dissimilar, possessed "Victorianism" in common, our system of government "broadened down from precedent to precedent," until the Reform Bill of 1867, followed by the Education Act of 1870, left no doubt in the mind of every intelligent person that the advent to power of some Mr. Ramsay Macdonald was only a question of time. Of course, there were people, including rigid economists who jeered at Ruskin when in 1862 he published *Unto this Last*, but neither he nor they shirked the issue—that the old order was changing, giving place to new. My nurse used to sing to me, not at all obliquely, about a "fine old English gentleman, one of the olden time"; but she and I both realized that

the type had even then disappeared, and that Gladstone and Bright reigned in its stead. When the American Civil War was approaching its close, we were all Southerners in my Tory home, because the South was the party supposed to represent the "good old English gentleman" spirit, and there was a large lithograph of Robert Lee in my father's room; but we all feared that Lincoln was sure to win in the long run, just as we knew that Tom Sayers would beat Heenan in the great prize fight, when I had twopence on the issue with the footman. What we did not know in those days, and I suppose this would be pitched upon as an example of "oblique approach," and of ignoring the unpleasantly obvious, was that the word "class" would come to be used in political discussions in a combative and derogatory sense. I cannot remember the word to have been used at all in my hearing as a boy, and the distinction itself was not, so far as I am aware, then recognized between employers and the people employed. This particular controversial weapon was reserved, as a refinement of the political art, for the use of a later and robuster generation.

So far was it from the minds of the Victorians to treat democracy as an unpleasant truth, and to shirk its obvious consequences, that from the day of Mr. Gladstone's succession to the leadership of the Liberal Party, the majority of people in the United Kingdom, whether voters or not, were in full cry after him to reach that goal which

they are now jibed at for having approached obliquely and with misgiving. There was Disraeli also, who was not only the Hebrew wizard of Victorian politics, but the author of *Sybil; or, the Two Nations*, pages and pages of which might have been written—if the genius were there—by some Labour leader. Disraeli had no fear of Democracy—he feared nothing and nobody. But he may, for all we can tell, appear one of these days in the pages of Mr. Lytton Strachey as “Poor Dizzy,” just as Childe Harold and Don Juan have issued from the laboratory of Mr. Harold Nicolson in the unrecognizable shape of “Poor Byron.” So far from fearing Democracy, Disraeli vastly preferred it to an oligarchy, or, as he was fond of defining it, “the cause for which Hampden had died on, the field and Sydney on the scaffold”—his ironic reference to the rule of the Whigs and of the Revolution families. He professed to believe, like Bolingbroke, in a Patriot King, but he looked to the people, the proletariat, to place him in power and keep him there, as shrewdly as Henry VII looked to his burgesses to help curb the remnants of the feudal lords, or the younger Pitt looked to every man with £10,000 a year, who was not a peer “but ought to be one,” to back him against those very same Revolution families, then headed by Mr. Fox. Just as a plebeian aristocracy had been blended with the patrician oligarchy, just as peers could be made of second-rate squires and fat graziers,

or caught from the alleys of Lombard Street and clutched from the counting-houses of Cornhill, so Disraeli believed, that the representatives of the people could be blended with the representatives of the middle class, and might even, with a little persuasion, be induced to sit upon the scarlet benches of the House of Lords. If Disraeli, the leader of the Tory Party, could foresee such a transformation of our political life, how can it be supposed that men of the opposite party, who learnt their history from Hallam and their politics from John Stuart Mill, could ignore it? The truth is, in trying to combine historical analysis—what is called the science of history—with dramatic biography, these modern writers vex more than they delight their readers. They weary us with the use of such expressions as the “spirit of the age,” the “onrush of Liberalism”; the “nineties,” and the “eighties.” They force one to ask oneself silly and irritating questions: What is an age? How can it have a spirit? What is the Liberalism that has a more decided onrush under Gladstone than under Milton or Luther? And when does a “century” begin, in any sense more distinctive than as a convenient numeral?

No one wishes to ask such pedantic and provocative questions, but they simply and inevitably arise when the dramatic presentation of Manning, Arnold, Tennyson, or Byron is arrested and confused by the misapplication of dryasdust expressions, or bleared by unscientific generalizations.

If Disraeli placed his irony and wit at the disposal of those forces that crushed out the remnant of an *ancien régime*; if, as leader of the Tory Party, he passed in 1867 an Act more drastically democratic than the notable Reform Bill of 1832, how came it that his opponents, Gladstone, Bright, Chamberlain, Dilke, and their Radical rank and file—how came it that their philosophers, publicists, and poets, democrats to a man—denounced him as an alien Imperialist, and as a stealer of other men's clothes, but never as an aristocrat and an oligarch? What really happened throughout the Victorian era was the spectacle of the two great political parties ranting on every platform to prove that one, and not the other, monopolized the democratic beatitudes and, as Disraeli put it, “only they are blessed who believe that power has only one duty—to secure the social welfare of the people.” In a passage in one of his novels, a pale young man, very thin, but with a countenance of remarkable energy, speaking of a national holiday, by which was meant a statutory reduction in the weekly hours of work, declared that “we shall never be able to make the people unanimous in a cessation of labour, because the selfish instincts will come into play and will balk our political object, while a great increase of physical suffering must be inevitable.” To this an older and wiser man replied: “It might be done if the unions were really to put their shoulder to the wheel—it might be done.” It is eighty years since these prophetic

words were written by a characteristic Victorian statesman, in a characteristic Victorian romance —a writer who certainly neither then nor later showed any fear of Democracy, nor any inclination to approach it obliquely. Reform Bills and Education Acts doubtless appeared to very many Victorians hazardous legislative experiments, especially to the older Whigs and Tories who still lingered on the scene, to the older publicists who had no politics other than the alternating triumph of the Blues and the Reds, to the poets who abandoned in middle life their youthful enthusiasms, who had left old friends “for the sake of a ribbon to stick in their coats.” But younger publicists of to-day, some of them no longer so young, who scoff at those poor Victorians, mislead their little coterie of admirers when they assure them that political consistency and moral courage are neo-Georgian products—that Peel was a poltroon, Palmerston a bravo, Gladstone a trimmer, and Disraeli a mugwump. No one looking at the effigies of these men, as they stand in marble and bronze in crowded thoroughfares, where their fellow citizens used respectfully to greet them as they passed, can readily believe these charges to be true.

The list is long of those who throughout Queen Victoria's reign influenced political thought by presenting history in a novel fashion, by expanding the economic theories of Adam Smith, and by bringing scientific experiment to bear on social problems. Hallam, Mill, Huxley,

and Morley did much sowing in order that others should reap. During the years when, under the impact of new ideas; of new forces, from 1848 to 1887, the British Empire grew to manhood, France was not behindhand in influencing public opinion in England. With avidity we young men read Michelet and Bastiat, philosophers who were no shirkers. During the Great War Monsieur Combes, not then Prime Minister, but called back in spite of his great age to serve France, was speaking to me of his youth, of those inspiring years at the Collège de France when he sat at the feet of Michelet; and in reply to my question why he had closed the convents and exiled the religious orders, he said: "I was taught in my youth that old religions cannot understand new ones." He went on to explain that the Vendéens could never comprehend the Republican idealists, that they too had a religion of their own, and as Michelet put it, "*l'impiété révolutionnaire était une religion, la religion nouvelle—elle avait sa foi et ses martyres.*" Michelet, I suppose, was another of our illusions, another of those oblique approachers of Democracy. Yet it was he who said: "Nous sommes à l'aurore des choses"; it was he who, time after time, warned his pupils that those among them had no vision of the future who took no account of the masses who, apart from instinct and inspiration, had learnt from hard experience. It was he who used to ask what remained of those old and terrible wars, what was there left

to show for the sacrifice of numberless lives? Of the old wars between France and England, nothing but the name of Joan of Arc! Of the prolonged struggles between France and Spain, nothing but the name of Henry IV! And so on. It was he who glorified the Roman youths to whom was entrusted the social task of "accusation," the denouncing of political culprits, of preachers, of local tyrannies; and it was he who so ardently wished to see the modern youth of France dedicated to that still higher mission that he called "*la pacification sociale.*" Finally, it was Michelet —and if Verlaine is a Victorian why not Michelet? —who taught his listeners at the Collège de France, and young men in England who read his works with rising hope, that the people care little for dialectics, that the people care less for formulae than for facts; that they unconsciously adopt Hoche's motto, "Things not words," and that the future lay in realizing the democratic aphorism, "*Volonté et puissance sont une et même chose.*" This teaching seemed to us then, and seems to me now, a fairly direct approach to democratic truth. I cannot myself see, individually or collectively, much difference between the statesmen and philosophers to whom I listened when I was young, and those who talk to us to-day. They all seem to have the faults and virtues of their calling. They do not appear to be more able to-day, than they were in former days, to resist the pressure of the party system, or of the particular group to which they belong. The

habit of acting together in parties, although it strengthens men to sacrifice personal prejudices for the sake of a public cause, makes them shy of new ideas for fear of their disruptive influence. Politicians have always been inclined to fix their minds upon old catechisms and formularies. That was true of the 'eighties and it is true of to-day.

Meantime, beyond the precincts of Westminster and Fleet Street, freedom and light continue to make their persistent way. There have always been enemies of freedom and light in conspicuous places; in Parliament, in the Universities, in the Athenaeum Club, in the London and provincial Press. Even in these enlightened times there are orators and writers always ready to lend unction to bad causes, professing disinterestedness, but in reality doing their best to stifle the generous instincts of the English common people. The double threads of altruism and selfishness run unbroken through our politics from the days of Sir Robert Walpole to those of Mr. Ramsay Macdonald. There is no need to single out the weaknesses of the Victorian Age. After all, it contained men like Charles Dickens and Lord Shaftesbury, quite outside the ranks of political party, who did as much as anybody is doing now to relieve human suffering and to remove odious restrictions upon human freedom. There is, perhaps, no half-century in our whole history which contained a larger number of men spending their lives in combating the narrow creed, the

contentious spirit of professional conservatism, than during the last fifty years of Queen Victoria's reign. Are the times in which we are living so free from obscurantism? A true reading of the past must inevitably lead a discerning student to the conclusion that there is mighty little difference between the forces of political progress and the forces of political reaction, then and now. To deny this is surely the very climax of historical undiscernment. There was possibly less political serenity in those days and less tolerance of unpopular opinion than there is to-day. People responded quickly and surely to high appeal, notably in the case of Mr. Gladstone, who knew how to tap the moral feelings of the English masses. Such appeals are jeered at in "highbrow" circles as giving expression to a somewhat silly sentimentality from which the present generation is happily free.

In my youth many schools of collectivist thinkers were dotted about Europe, and Socialism had already been defined as a criticism of the idea of property in the light of the public good. It was considered a poison germ by many old-fashioned people in those days, but so it is to-day. I can only say that we argued for and against the Socialistic theories that came over to us from France and Germany with as much considerateness, elevation, and knowledge as can be found to-day in the speeches of excited parliamentary candidates, and in the leading organs of public opinion. Mill, many of whose theories are dis-

carded now, nevertheless said with great sagacity as far back as 1867 that, the new "Democracy" not being interested personally in the support of property, especially in its inequalities, the laws of property would no longer depend upon personal motives operating on those who controlled the Government. Mill's view was perfectly well understood by the Liberals, who had for many years advocated an extension of the suffrage, and by Mr. Disraeli and the Tory Party, who brought in the new Reform Bill. There was surely no lack of courage displayed by these men, who widened the suffrage although they had already foreseen that this political act brought within measurable distance that Socialism which, together with Internationalism, were the two cardinal ideas upon which political life in Europe, especially in England, was beginning to turn.

Disraeli's aphorism that it was the business of statesmen to effect by policy what revolution would effect by force, was tacitly accepted and actively pursued by both parties during the latter half of the much-maligned nineteenth century. The task of accommodating old political and social institutions to a condition of things in which the centre of gravity had been finally shifted was skilfully performed by Queen Victoria's servants and subjects. It is difficult, therefore, to contend with any degree of truth that they shirked the issue of Democracy.

When we poor Victorians are accused of approaching religion from the gentler angle of

compromise, it is difficult to be sure what our critics mean. Is the sarcasm levelled at Anglican churchmen—churchmen who “went over” to Rome—or at those who remained behind within the refuge of the Establishment? Is it pointed at sectarians like the followers of Edward Irving, at the Nonconformist conscience, or at combative agnostics like Huxley and John Morley?

There are always wavers—men who cannot be bothered to plumb the depths. This was specially bound to be the case at a moment of European moral unrest when discoveries in geology, in archaeology, and in every branch of science were beginning to shatter the simple beliefs of the average man, throwing doubt on the Pentateuch, which the lowly looked upon as inspired, and questioning the historical foundations of the Christian tradition. Until about the middle of Queen Victoria’s reign it occurred to very few men and to still fewer women to apply critical tests to the Holy Jewish Books and to inquire openly into the authenticity of the synoptic Gospels. Whatever may have been the case in France, Voltaire and the Encyclopaedists were unrecognized in England. They were classed under the discredited heading of philosophers, and they were ignored by the average man. Suddenly, however, threatening clouds began to appear in a new quarter. Quiet searchers among the rocks, eager explorers among the sand-wastes, began to publish strange discoveries, followed by deductions that gradually found

acceptance in the broader schools of European thought. The new knowledge and the new philosophy made little progress at first among the masses in England, but as the nineteenth century waned the Christian temples in Southern and Northern Europe became less frequented, and the Semitic classics began to be judged by the same standard of probability and taste as the Sacred Books of the Arian races in the Eastern regions of the world. The science of comparative religion directly and indirectly came sharply into conflict with the traditions that during long centuries had gathered round the Christian Churches in Eastern and Western Europe. The effect of scientific discoveries and Biblical criticism on the French and German peoples was more rapid and more damaging to current religious beliefs than in England or Scotland. In our country we began to busy ourselves with personalities rather than with dogma and with criticism. There were sad rumours in the newspapers about Bishop Colenso. Matthew Arnold was supposed to be writing books after a fashion that his eminent father would have strongly disapproved; there was a naturalist, Charles Darwin, who was accused by Bishop Wilberforce of talking nonsense about monkeys; and there was a tasteless iconoclast, a certain John Morley, who insisted on spelling the word "God" without the familiar capital letter. No doubt these searchings of heart were for a long time confined within the orbit of the older Universities and to the readers of a

few monthly reviews. They had no place in the books that the majority of people read. The magazines in which Gladstone, inflamed by religious passion, denounced Professor Huxley, the pamphlets that Huxley hurled back at his antagonist, the pained philippics of Kingsley, even the fine classic in which Dr. Newman clothed an apology for his life, were only read by a few hundreds or a few thousands of their bewildered countrymen. A daily circulation of newspapers running into millions, expounding, illustrating every archaeological discovery, every new biological or metaphysical thesis, every scientific qualification of accepted doctrines, had yet to come. So that it is scarcely fair to accuse three whole generations of men of shirking questions and controversies of which the majority were totally unaware.

There were, of course, plenty of ardent theologians. There were plenty of still more ardent fanatical agnostics. There were men who founded sects like Edward Irving, or new religions of humanity like Auguste Comte; there were realists like Strauss, idealists like Renan, who fiercely or gently, according to their temperament, thrust aside the attributes of divinity in relating the Christian story. There were women novelists like Charlotte Brontë and George Eliot, whose doubtful orthodoxy, quite unashamed, was a matter of serious concern to their admirers. Although dogma was preached in our public schools, we were never taught, when I was young,

the meaning of the word "religion," and most of us grew to manhood ignorant of whether its derivation could properly be ascribed to the verb *religare*, to bind, or, as Cicero appeared to think, to the verb *religire*, to be re-read. To a "high-brow" this confession must be very exasperating.

It is easy enough nowadays, when the area of knowledge is so much wider, to approach with direct criticism the simpler beliefs of these days. Every text-book, the Oxford chronology of history, every school-teacher, lay or cleric, dated the creation of the world, dated Adam and Abraham, as incontrovertibly as they dated the Battle of Cannae or the defeat of the Spanish Armada. About the middle of the century a change began to be perceptible; and then, thanks to Lyell, to Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times*, to books like *Vestiges of Creation* and *The Old Red Sandstone*, which commanded a certain degree of popular attention, there was a dawning impression that the dogmatic chronology of the Churches might be based on a mistaken tradition. As yet, however, no windows had been opened enabling young students to glance into the past of a world hundreds of thousands of years old, to pre-glacial ages where traces of man were distinctly recognizable, and where palaeolithic artists had left in colour and in stone examples of draughtsmanship and technique almost equalling ours. There is no reason to suppose that even Mr. Gladstone or Dr. Arnold had ever heard of the caves of Altamira or of the Camp of Solutre. It is remarkable,

when you come to think of the primitive ignorance of eminent publicists half a century ago—of their scant knowledge of ethnology, of most of the other ologies, of the Cimmerian darkness, in short, in which we plunged in days before the Neanderthal man and the Grimaldi race were discussed by "shingled" girls—that we should have accepted, as we did so readily, the teaching of Darwin, and that we should have followed with sympathetic joy the dazzling rapier strokes of Huxley, as he dashed under the guard of his adversaries. We could not speculate then, as every schoolgirl can now, upon the relation of the souls of Neanderthal men and women to their primitive physical development. We knew nothing of Tasmania and its indigenous population of half-human beings to whom souls can hardly as yet have been vouchsafed. "Sceptics" fifty years ago were a body of unpopular persons who had plagiarized from Voltaire, and had learned from Diderot and Hume to query the *a priori* reasoning of churchmen. They were marauders, intellectual freebooters, and were not looked upon as philosophers searching patiently the records of the past, rejecting and testing by experiment and proof.

The old philosophic method was, of course, well understood and had been recognized since the Renaissance in other realms of knowledge, but it was only now beginning to be applied to the biological story of man himself. Though much was still obscure, many childish beliefs

were abandoned, and whole chapters of the past history of the human race, stretching back tens of thousands of years, far beyond the term where ecclesiastical history began, had been opened up before the Victorian era may be said to have closed. It is easy for the neo-Georgian, with the trump card in his hands, to sweep with ironic eyes over the game as it was played half a century ago by the doubters who held no court cards at all. The marvel is that Huxley and W. K. Clifford should have bluffed so well, exhibiting pluck that many of their more timid successors may very well envy and respect. I well remember the enthusiasm with which Clifford's urgent apostrophe to shout truth from the housetops was received. He certainly continued to shout until his brilliant notes failed him, alas, too soon. Frank Balfour, so well beloved at Trinity, in his quiet, arresting fashion, never swerved by an inch from the path of scientific truth that he had marked out for himself.

Take a very different type, Charles Gordon, one of those men of simple and childlike faith in the objectivity of the Bible record. Fighter as he was, there was nothing combative about his religious beliefs, although they were unconcealed and held with a tenacity very far from oblique. He once said to me, "I believe in the God of Abraham, and as I came to your house He walked with me arm in arm up South Audley Street." And he rejoiced in telling good Christians that he had found the forbidden fruit, and

laughed when they thought him mad. There was no timidity about the religion of Chinese Gordon. There was even less feeble approach about John Henry Newman's "one step enough for me," and in his ultimate salutation to the well-worn apothegm *securus judicat orbis terrarum*. Nothing could have been less apologetic than Newman's *Apologia*. But when we come to Victorians whose faith or whose agnosticism was not so obvious, men like Frederick Maurice, Jowett of Balliol, Matthew Arnold or Samuel Wilberforce, no one has any possible right, if he values sincerity, to class these men among the insincere, or to question their professed adherence to, or rejection of, orthodox Anglican forms of Christianity. A scholar such as Bishop Lightfoot, a theologian like Westcott, a broad Christian saint such as Archbishop Temple always showed himself to be, made no oblique approaches to the dogmas they preached. No one but a fool would have dreamed of accusing Arthur Stanton of St. Albans or Sebastian Bowden, the Oratorian, of leading their disciples along the rough path they themselves had chosen from the "gentler angle of compromise." On the other side, Huxley, followed by scores of young enthusiastic men of science, was ruthless, even brutal, in exposing what he believed to be hurtful fallacies, and he never hesitated to denounce the dogmas that those other men taught either as superstition or incorrect science based on guesswork and false analogy.

Can it for a moment be supposed that F. W. Maitland was shirking the truth when he said of one of his dearest friends that "Leslie Stephen never shrank from stating in the plainest terms his rejection of Christian dogma"? Of course, there is a distinction between free-thinking and plain-speaking. At least a hundred years before the Victorian era began, Lord Chesterfield, writing to some lady in France and commenting on Voltaire, had said, "que chacun pense comme il veut, ou plutôt comme il peut, mais qu'il ne communique pas ses idées dès qu'ils sont de nature à pouvoir troubler le repos de la société." There were many Victorians who did not share Lord Chesterfield's scruples, and Leslie Stephen, who was honoured by generations of young Victorians, never concealed his doubts or feared to take action, going so far as to abandon "orders" and to turn his back on Christianity, even though the action he took caused pain to those who were nearest and dearest to him.

Many of us in my youth were torn between admiration for the letters of Robertson of Brighton and what was called, by a shrewd adviser of young enthusiasts, the religion of all sensible men. Over my mantelpiece in Trinity College one of my friends had pinned up the well-known lines:

Myself when young did eagerly frequent  
Doctor and Saint, and heard great Argument  
About it and about: but evermore  
Came out by the same door wherein I went.

This was in my young days a very common view of one of the great problems of life, and it does not appear to me even now irrational or cowardly.

It was somewhere about 1851 that August Comte published his *Calendar*, and among the Positivists, Frederick Harrison, John Morley, and George Eliot are names that do not suggest compromise except to reject it.

Within my own experience and vivid impressions, I remember how deeply some of my younger companions reacted to the piety of the youthful Dominicans who had sat with Lacordaire in the last hours of his life. Gladstone's overwhelming sense of passionate faith in Christian dogma was common knowledge, and so was the solemn certitude that characterized every approach of the late Lord Salisbury to the established Church of England. No one who ever saw him or loved him, as I did, can forget the childlike faith of Alexander Whyte in the Church of his fathers. If ever in the Elysian Fields our neo-Georgian writers come face to face with the spirits of these Victorian Titans, they will surely have a very uncomfortable quarter of an hour. Huxley, that grim old fighter, would, I suppose, smile and pass on: Darwin, gentle and modest, though quite uncompromising and tenacious, would certainly not comprehend that his honest life-work, his intense striving to arrive at the truth, should be suspect or called oblique.

A mere mention of all these names shows the

folly of attempting to classify men so various under a comprehensive heading. Victorians never existed. Variations in temperament, conflict of ideas, courage and cowardice, are common to all epochs of which we have any ample record. It is even conceivable that among the *Précieuses Ridicules* of that mighty *Grand Siècle*, and among the prigs of that nineteenth century which in many ways was as great as its predecessors, there were to be found men and women who in youth, in middle and in old age, were no less intelligent and quite as vain of their intelligence as the "highbrows" of the twentieth.

Sex is a topic less easy to handle, because it is the word, not the thing itself, upon which neo-Georgian writers love to harp. They make no attempt to define its meaning, whether used as a mystery or a vulgarism. They show no more aptitude for approaching directly the problem of sex than centuries ago did Longus, or centuries later La Fontaine or the Victorian Swinburne. If the present-day poets claim that they are free of convention, they do not appear to the casual reader more libertine than Oscar Wilde; and when female editors of modern magazines show preference for Marlowe and find in Piers Gaveston a more romantic figure than Romeo, it is just as well to remember that *Mdlle de Maupin* and *Dorian Gray* were eulogistically reviewed in the *Fortnightly* in the prudish days of Victorian England. Sex has an uncomfortable way of

pervading the literature of the world, from Persia to the Parnassians, from Petronius to *Poems and Ballads*. It is in the nature of things that men of uncertain temperament should frame an Index Expurgatorius, that certain books should be banished from the *bonheur-du-jour* of the *demi-vierge* and excluded by celibate librarians from Eton College.

The indexing of Swinburne's lyrics by the authorities of a great public school in the nineteenth century does not necessarily entail a welcome by their successors to the author of *Antic Hay*. These questionings and vagaries are the muffled changes rung throughout the ages whenever idealism and realistic youth swing into contact. Fashions count for so much, and morals for so little. Women in a ball-room to-day look like the fifteen hundred boy-pages of Ptolemy Philadelphus, while the modest *décolletage* of Mme de Pompadour left everything to the imagination of D'Alembert. The approach to sex under Louis XV may have been less oblique than, let us say, under Napoleon III, which may indefinitely be argued, but correct parentage was as doubtful under Queen Victoria as modern novelists and playwrights could wish. In the region of frivolity there is not so much difference between the Dancing Club of 1924 and the Dancing Saloon in 1874, except that the syncopations of the band are more obvious and class distinctions of the dancers less so. In these days ladies smoke cigarettes in restaurants; in those days gentle-

men threw away their cigars before approaching the railings of Rotten Row. Fashion has more to do with this than philosophy. A lifeguardsman in those days walked rather jauntily arm in arm with nursemaids, whereas his arm takes nowadays a more familiar fold. Perhaps the tightness of the old uniform had more to do with this lapse into prudery than the greater emotional appeal that sex is supposed to make to the young in these days. But suppose we admit that sex problems were approached in the Victorian era from an oblique angle—what of that? Sex can be approached without an index forefinger, just as wit may be appreciated without laughter. An oblique smile is enough, and is sometimes thought to be better bred. It never seems to occur to these writers whose style is pervaded by sex that light covering may heighten its enjoyment. There is a French story of a nude girl wandering along the seashore and exciting no attention; but when she found a box of millinery, jetsam of the seas, and was fashionably attired, every male in the island trailed in her wake. There is nothing to show in the literature and romance of the last century that men were less manly and lovers less passionate under the Victorian moon. Were women indeed colder and more chaste? Or are the factors of desire fairly constant in every epoch?

There is an answer in Kipling's lines emphasizing the denominator that is common to the sexes. Surely the orange-blossom and the fig-leaf are symbolic, and not basic facts in human

psychology. Although critics choose to ignore it, the Literature and Arts of the Victorian era groan with the portents of sex. Lecky's classical volumes on *European Morals* show no desire to shirk the issues. His handling of his subject was as frank and detached as Gibbons. His was • no furtive approach to forbidden fruit. Rochester and Jane Eyre made no concealment of the passion that deluged them. No veil was drawn by George Eliot over the sexual lapse of Hetty Sorrel. *Jude the Obscure*, I suppose, should not be classed as a product of that benighted age, because Hardy is mercifully still with us. "Night murmurs to the morning," and its subsequent imagery can scarcely be called an indirect approach to the subject which so worries and stimulates Mr. Harold Nicolson. If the Victorian Lecky is to be believed, ethnology may have more to do with manifestations of sex than chronology. He says, somewhere, that the coarse, cynical, ostentatious sensuality of the French character, the dreamy, languid, and aesthetic sensuality of the Spaniard or the Italian, the furtive and retiring sensuality of some Northern nations, though all forms of the same thing, exercise widely different effects—and this shrewd criticism applies to most epochs of the world. The fact is, these modern "highbrows" make themselves ridiculous, like the *Précieuses* of old, by their absurd generalizations and silly enthusiasms in Literature and the Fine Arts. They have quite recently discovered Flaubert,

and they have invented Proust as their predecessors invented Voiture. They have been hot in pursuit of Congreve and Piero de la Francesca, while for the moment Pope is left on the shelf awaiting discovery and Raphael relegated to the servants' hall.

They have fastened upon Sebastian Bach and Arthur Sullivan, a quaint combination as the rippling accompanists of their monologues, while Puccini is classed with the vulgar for his "sentimental and blatant" treatment of Murger's story.

How astonished Hubert Parry or Stanford would be to learn that Sebastian Bach had been discovered by the neo-Georgians, still more astonished would be those countless numbers who listened to Sir Walter Parratt's unsurpassed playing of Bach's Preludes and Fugues through countless years. When Mascarille fooled a highly cultured group of "highbrows" who failed to detect his neat substitution of a Prelude for a Fugue, they performed what Dan Leno, had he been there, might have called the dizzy feat of slipping down the Bach stairs. Madelon and Cathos, Charles and Joseph Surface are permanent types, but they are characteristic of no special epoch and of no special group. Anything less like Joseph than Alfred Tennyson cannot be imagined, and a resemblance between Charles Surface and Mr. Lytton Strachey can only be traced by the most subtle of "highbrows."

A great genius made fun of "ces femelles docteurs, persuadées qu'une pensée ne valait rien

lorsqu'elle était entendue de tout le monde ; qui exigeait de ceux qu'elle honorait de leur estime des clartés audessus du vulgaire." That was the trouble which characterized the epicene men and women who, under Louis XIV, "discovered" the fripperies of Catherine de Medici's Italian following. That is the trouble that haunts to-day epicene bathers in Wessex ponds and sex-blind lizards on the Lido. The trouble that characterized those poor Victorians was this. They cared, sentimentally if you will, too much for numbers that flowed for old forgotten far-off things, or for familiar matters of to-day. They had no taste for caviare. And above all, they were impressed by the senile reflections of a Roman Emperor—for the classics were then still in fashion—who said that we can never hope to realize Plato's Republic. "Let it be sufficient that you have in some slight degree ameliorated mankind, and do not think that amelioration a matter of small importance."





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